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THE NEW YORKER

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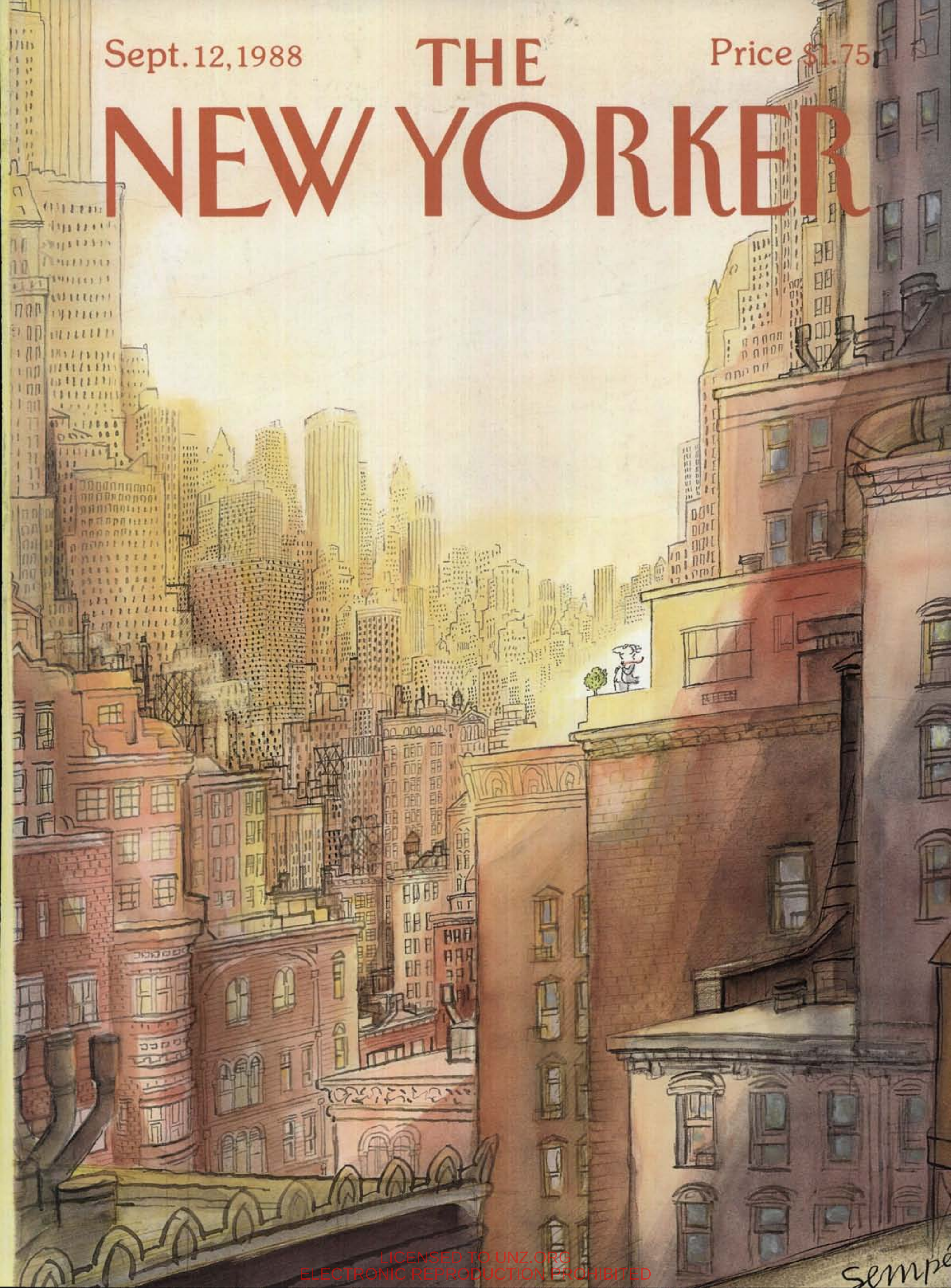

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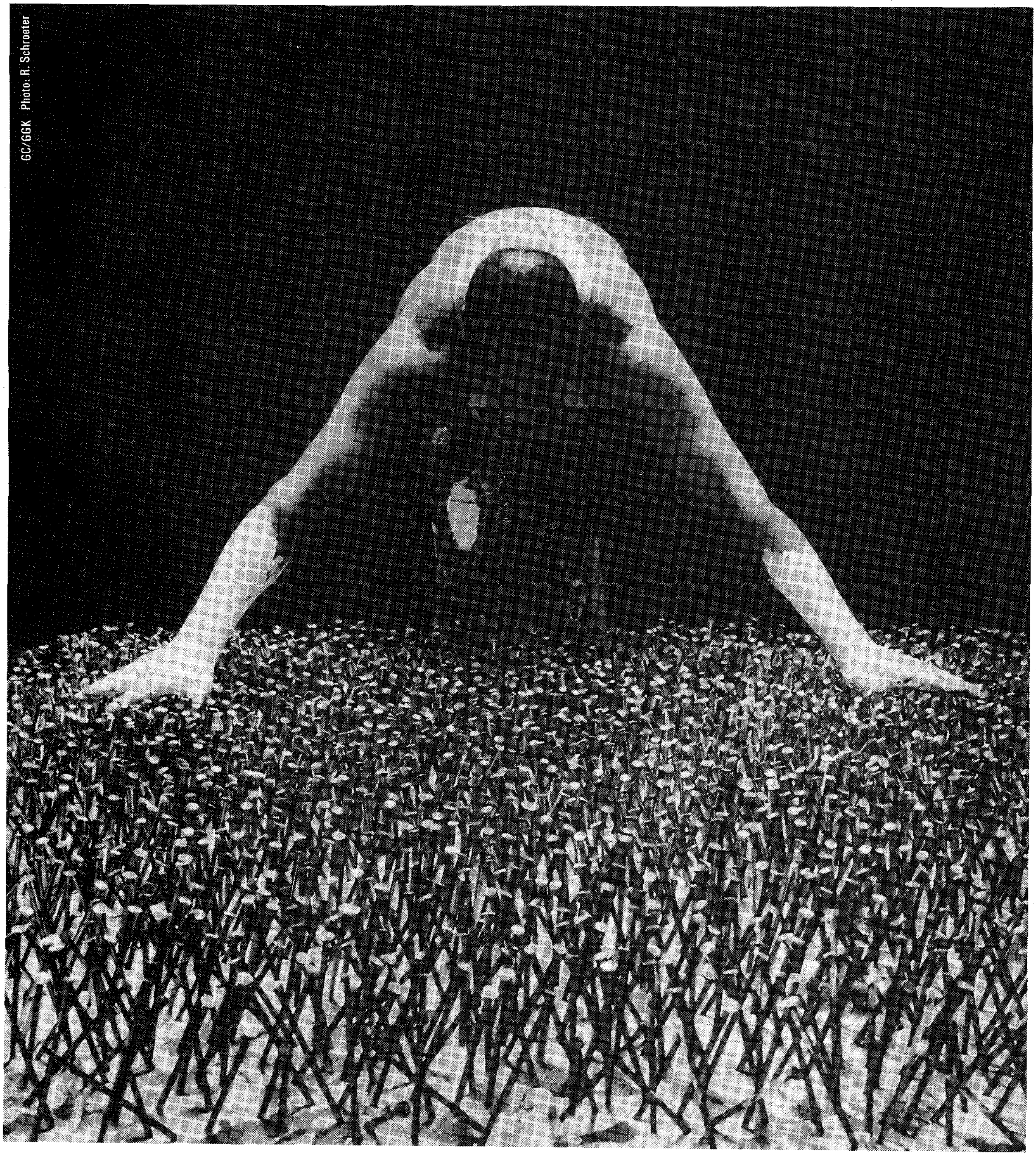

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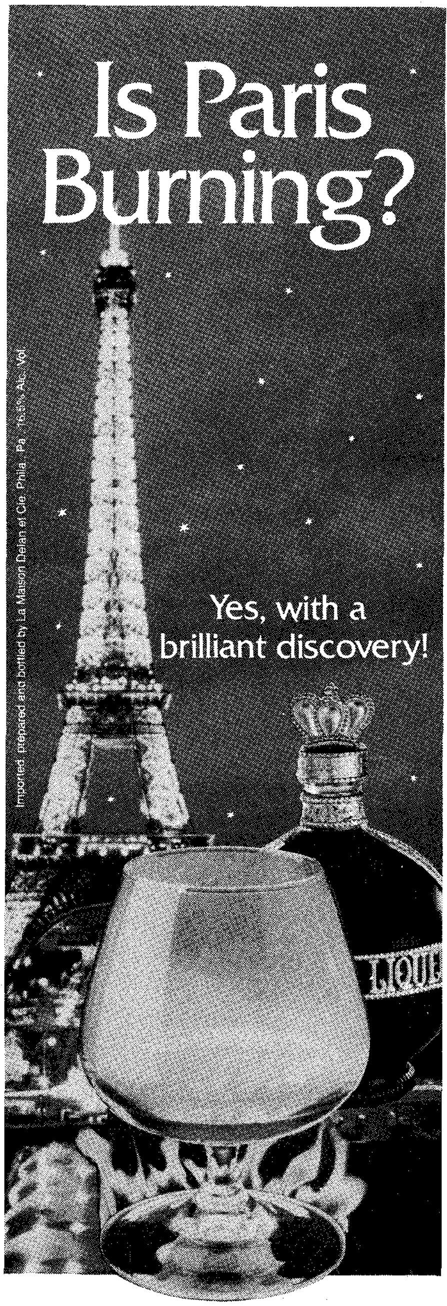
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THE NEW YORKER

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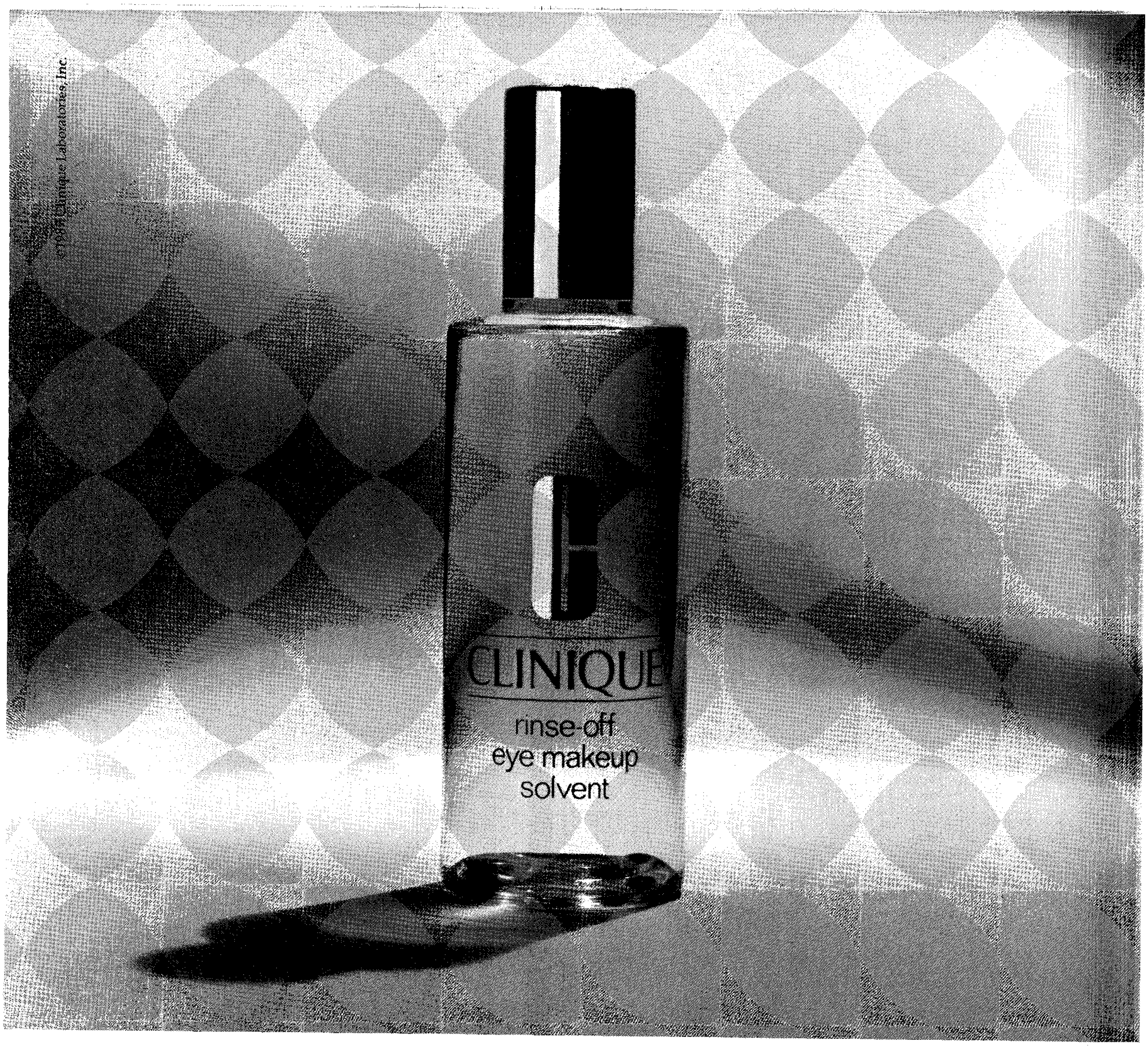

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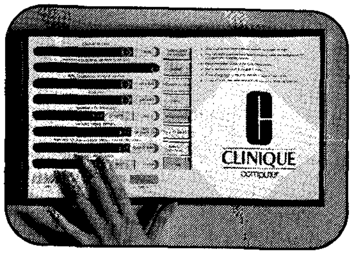

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

Ain't Misbehavin'—A revival, after ten years, of this celebration of the music and the comic spirit of Fats Waller, in all its beauty and variety, as conceived and directed by Richard Maltby, Jr. The members of the original company are present and just as dynamic as they were the first time around. They are Nell Carter, Andre De Shields, Armelia McQueen, Ken Page, and Charlaine Woodard. The invaluable (and protean) Luther Henderson, conductor and arranger, again presides at the piano. (Reviewed in our issue of 9/5/88.) (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 3.)

Checkmates—Ron Milner's "domestic comedy," about an older couple who lease the apartment above them to a recently married young couple, should be more entertaining than it is. There are some funny moments, though, and the performances are distinguished. The actors are Ruby Dee and Paul Winfield (downstairs) and Denzel Washington and Marsha Jackson (upstairs). Woodie King, Jr., directed. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Godspell—A revival of the 1971 musical by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

M. Butterfly—David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play is based on an actual case. A French diplomat takes as his mistress a star of the Beijing Opera, and some twenty years later—when they are both charged with being spies—discovers that "she" is a he. David Dukes is the diplomat; B. D. Wong is exceptional as his lover. Lori Tan Chinn and George N. Martin give them sound support. (4/4/88) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

The Mistress of the Inn—Carlo Goldoni's 1753 play, with Tovah Feldshuh. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday at 2. Closes Sunday, Sept. 11.)

Negro Ensemble Company—Presenting **from the mississippi delta,** an ingenious play by Endesha Ida Mae Holland that, in a kind of dramatic collage, traces the life of a young woman from the fifties to the eighties. Brenda Denmark, LaTanya Richardson, and Gwen Roberts-Frost, three mettlesome actresses, portray her and an assortment of other characters, male and female. (9/5/88) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30.)

The Phantom of the Opera—The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible, including the overhyped performance of Michael Crawford in the title role. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

Road—This poignant and exhilarating new play by Jim Cartwright takes the audience on a night prowl through a Lancashire slum and, by implication, on a spiritual tour of depressed Thatcherite England. The play is performed promenade style (the audience has the option of sitting or joining the actors onstage) by an exceptionally able cast. The production is not seamless, but it features some amazingly good acting, most notably from Kevin Bacon, Michael Wincott, and Jayne Haynes. Lincoln Center produced this interesting piece of theatre, which was directed by Simon Curtis, of the Royal Court Theatre, in London. (8/15/88) (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3. Closes Sunday, Sept. 18.)

d. ehrenberg

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The Road to Mecca—An absorbing, if somewhat elusive, play by the South African dramatist Athol Fugard, about an aging woman sculptor who is mystical and independent, and who resists the attempts of a local minister to persuade her to go into an old-people's home. With Yvonne Bryceland, Mr. Fugard himself, and Kathy Bates, as a young disciple of the sculptor. Mr. Fugard directed. (4/25/88) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinées Wednesday and Saturday at 2, and Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Sept. 11.)

Romance/Romance—A pair of charming one-act musicals that have travelled successfully from Off to Broadway. Scott Bakula and Alison Fraser are as romantic as required in the leading roles. Barry Harman wrote the clever books and lyrics, and Keith Herrmann wrote the engaging scores. Mr. Harman directed. (5/16/88) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Speed-the-Plow—David Mamet's satire on Hollywood is just as scathing, just as acute as his "Glengarry Glen Ross," and even funnier, if that can be imagined. With David Rasche, Bob Balaban, and Felicity Huffman; directed by Gregory Mosher. (5/16/88) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

Tartuffe and **Romeo and Juliet**—Two works in repertory, presented by the RAPP Theatre Company. Molière's **tartuffe** plays Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday evenings. **romeo and juliet** plays Wednesday and Friday evenings, and Saturday matinées. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 279-4200. Evenings, except Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 6-7, at 8. Matinées at 2.)

Long Runs—**anything goes:** This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, Patti LuPone, Anthony Heald, and Kathleen Mahony-Bennett, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **broadway bound:** In the third of his trilogy of autobiographical plays, Neil Simon takes us from Brooklyn to Manhattan, from ignominy to the promise of fame. Joan Rivers plays the mother; Gene Saks was the director. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **burn this:** A play by Lanford Wilson, with Scott Glenn as a foul-mouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **cats:** Ezra Pound nicknamed T. S. Eliot "Old Possum," and under that name Eliot wrote a collection of poems about cats, and now the cats are on display on Broadway, with music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, scenery and costumes by John Napier, and direction by Trevor Nunn. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **a chorus line:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **driving miss daisy:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **the fantasticks:** This longest of long runs recently had its twenty-eighth birthday. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42nd street:** Once upon a time there was a silly-wonderful Warner Brothers musical about a young hoofer who goes on in place of a disabled star and herself becomes a star overnight. The legitimate musical that has been fashioned from the movie musical is just as silly but by no means as wonderful. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **frankie and johnny in the clair de lune:** Terrence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3.) . . . **into the woods:** This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. With Dick Cavett as the Narrator. (He leaves the cast after Sunday, Sept. 11.) Directed by Mr. Lapine. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **me and my girl:** A fifty-year-old British musical starring Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **les misérables:** Tim Shew and Norman Large star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2; special matinée Monday, Sept. 5, at 2:30.) . . . **nunsense:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **oil city symphony:** Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Michelle Horman, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny musical. (Circle in the Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **sarafina!:** This South African mu-

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THE THEATRE—Cont'd

sical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. The acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **A SHAYNA MAIDEL:** A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana, and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

WITHOUT YOU I'M NOTHING—Sandra Bernhard in a one-woman show. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8; Fridays and Saturdays at 8 and 10:30; and Sundays at 5:30 and 9.)

JACKIE MASON'S "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ME!"—The comedian's one-man show. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Wednesdays through Saturdays, and Tuesday, Sept. 13, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, except Sept. 14, at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

TEN PERCENT REVUE—A musical revue by Tom Wilson Weinberg about gay life. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 4.)

THE TAFFETAS—A revue of songs from the early fifties. Four female singers reprise the hits of Rosemary Clooney, Jo Stafford, the Lennon Sisters, and others. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

LIGHT OPERA OF MANHATTAN—Presenting Victor Herbert's **THE RED MILL.** (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Saturdays and Sundays at 3:30. Closes Sunday, Sept. 18.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

ANGRY SQUIRE, 216 Seventh Ave., at 23rd St. (242-9066)—A nautically appointed bar and restaurant. Any swaying you may notice yourself doing is probably generated by the musicians, who perform amidships on a railed-in platform. **TONY MONTE,** a pianist who serves singers (Jonathan Schwartz, Marlene VerPlanck) well, heads up a trio on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 9-10. First set at ten.

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A sleek cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, near the flower and fur markets. **BLOSSOM DEARIE,** whose voice is no bigger than a dainty child's and is just the right instrument for singing "Peel Me a Grape" and "Moonlight Saving Time," gives an early-bird show Wednesdays through Saturdays at six-thirty. Marilyn Sokol sings at nine Tuesdays through Saturdays, and Jeff McBride, a New Age magician (he calls himself a "fusion-illusionist"), performs at eleven Wednesdays through Saturdays.

BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—A fledgling jazz operation that could easily be mistaken for a yuppie bar. The scenery includes waiters and waitresses in bowling shirts, some trees, and some nice-looking neon wading birds. **JOHN HICKS,** a pianist often heard with Arthur Blythe and David Murray, leads a threesome on Wednesday, Sept. 7; drummer **ELIOT ZIGMUND'S** trio holds forth on Thursday, Sept. 8; and **DEWEY REDMAN,** a Texas tenor man who got his wings under Ornette Coleman, brings in a quartet on Friday and Saturday, Sept. 9-10. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A bemirrored jazz club with a piece of neon art on the back wall (the Manhattan skyline and attendant celestial bodies) and with clusters of musicians on the dais. A West Coast contingent led by bassist **RAY BROWN** and featuring a mellow-toned crooner named **ERNIE ANDREWS** will be around Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 6-11. **DIZZY GILLESPIE** has cooled down a little while moving past seventy—he tends to hang out in the middle register, where he sounds almost reflective—but he hasn't become solemn; the slyboots performer is still in evidence. He'll be here with his quintet starting Tuesday, Sept. 13. Music from nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Bruce Springsteen played here in 1975 and, eyewitnesses say, just about blew the house down; Tony Bennett sang here in 1981; and Dan Hicks, the toast of the folk-swing circuit, spent a night here in 1987. ("Howdja hear about this?" Hicks asked the audience, a small one.) In between and since, big stars and little stars, people with interesting haircuts and people with no hair have come and gone. **LAURA NYRO** occasionally peers out from behind her long black veil of hair and wails her dreamy soul songs; she'll do it Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 7-8. **RICHARD BARONE** performs his soft, melodious pop-rock tunes on Friday, Sept. 9. **POWER TOOLS,** a new-jazz trio made up of **BILL FRISELL** (guitar), **MELVIN GIBBS** (electric bass), and **RONALD SHANNON JACKSON** (drums), holds forth on Saturday, Sept. 10. Al B. Sure!, a young smoothie who sings monochrome pop-soul numbers to neck by, has the floor on Tuesday, Sept. 13. **LONNIE MACK,** a veteran rock-and-roll man, will be here Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 14-15, with his guitar and his songs about cars and jail and the Devil. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty. Dining.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A Village bar that has long featured first-rate piano-bass teams and pro conversationalists and that now also features Bradley's T-shirts, Bradley's sweatshirts, Bradley's customized coasters, a person to take an admission fee, and a person to seat you and shush you. It's an institution. **RED MITCHELL,** a firm but gentle-toned bassist, is in residence here for the next couple of weeks. **KENNY BARRON** works with him through Saturday, Sept. 10, and **MIKE MELVOIN** joins him for six nights starting Monday, Sept. 12. On Sunday, Sept. 11, he's in the company of **BEN ARONOV** and trombonist **JIMMY KNEPPER.** Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—It's so nice in here—silken woodwork and long tables with pink tablecloths and pink napkins—you might mistake it for a jazz club on a movie set but for the real musicians onstage. On Mondays, **HAMIET BLUIETT,** the bearded baritone voice of the World Saxophone Quartet, directs his Telepathic Big Band. Jamaican pianist **MONTY ALEXANDER** leads a combo Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 6-11. Music from nine-thirty. Dining.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—A red-velvet-and-mirror-walled jazz lair that will seem intimate to some people and too intimate to tall people (who may want to remove their homburgs before entering). **JACKIE CAIN** and **ROY KRAL,** a light-footed vocal team (they're also married, and he also plays piano) who have been singing and scatting in unison since the late forties (when they were with Charlie Ventura's Bop for the People combo), perform Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 6-11. Mondays remain in the hands of guitarist **LES PAUL.** Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—Two nice things not known to be available in the next world—Chinese cooking and American jazz—are here, under a greenhouse roof, above which garden-variety skyscrapers loom. **JUDY CARMICHAEL,** a young, wispy-looking California pianist who likes to play in the old Harlem stride style, leads a trio nightly except Mondays. Music from nine-thirty Tuesdays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

JAN WALLMAN'S, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A room fit for a singer, an accompanist or two, and a party of forty-eight. Pianist **CAROL BRITTO** works with guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **GARY MAZZAROPPI** on Friday, Sept. 9; **BARBARA LEA,** a pippin of a singer, performs on Saturday, Sept. 10; and on Monday, Sept. 12, **RITA GARDNER** sings songs by Bart Howard ("Fly Me to the Moon," "Year After Year"), with help from **BUDDY BARNES,** Mabel Mercer's onetime accompanist. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays and Monday, Sept. 5.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A pleasant, low-key bar and restaurant in the piano-bass district. **JAMES WILLIAMS** and **JAMIL NASSER**—an all-Memphis piano-bass team—are on duty Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 6-10; **STEVE KUHN** and **RON CARTER** will be in charge starting Tuesday, Sept. 13. On Sundays and Mondays, a young New Orleans pianist named **HARRY CONNICK, JR.,** plays Monk ("Blue Monk") or Rodgers and Hart ("Blue Moon") or blue Beatles ("Eleanor Rigby"), and, occasionally, in a light, homemade voice, sings something like "When I Take My Sugar to Tea." Music from about nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor music and performing space, where people come to ponder the meaning of harmolodics and the post-ness of postmodernism. The room is run by two amiable young guys from Wisconsin, whose views on such things as cover charges are enlightened. Mondays are claimed by saxophonist **JEMEEL MOONDOC'S** Jus Grew Orchestra; Wednesdays belong to **THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS,** a rock-and-roll operation consisting of two clever, pun-happy boys and their boom box; **BAND OF SUSANS,** a New York noise-rock outfit whose material runs from a shrieking instrumental called "Elliott Abrams in Hell" to songs that pit a literary voice against wave after wave of guitars (the guitars win), will be here on Friday, Sept. 9; and **CURLEW,** a clattering downtown new-jazz ensemble, performs on Saturday, Sept. 10. Music after nine.

LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—Scary-movie buffs like the epic-size iguana on the roof; Texans like the reminders of home; and musicians like the Texans, the New Yorkers, and the other visitors from this planet who regularly fill the joint up. The **ITALS,** a reggae harmony group, perform on Tuesday, Sept. 6; **JERRY JEFF WALKER,** an old hand at loose, boozy country rock, has the floor on Wednesday, Sept. 7; Chicago bluesman **EDDIE CLEARWATER** is here on Saturday, Sept. 10; and Little Charlie & the Nightcats, a West Coast blues combo, hold forth on Tuesday, Sept. 13. Music after nine. Dining. Closed Sunday, Sept. 11.

LONE STAR CAFÉ ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The midtown branch of the aforementioned honky-tonk. The façade is a Silver Eagle bus, the kind your itinerant musician tools around in. The inside is upscale roadhouse; it has a couple of postage-stamp dance floors, and some real pretty Gibson guitars decorating the walls. Some of the musicians who appear at the parent joint also do their bit here. Thus, it's **JERRY JEFF WALKER** on Tuesday, Sept. 6; the **ITALS** on Wednesday, Sept. 7; and **EDDIE CLEARWATER'S** band on Friday, Sept. 9. Music after nine. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Not far from this pub's gabbing, well-heeled crowds, a combo modelled after Django Reinhardt's Hot Club band plays. **MICHELE BAUTIER,** who sang here last winter with this group (she was got up as a blond thirties-style Venus, and she did a French "Star Dust" and the Franglais "Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup"), again adds her voice to the proceedings. The Djangoistes perform at nine and eleven Tuesday through Saturday, Sept. 6-10. **MEL TORMÉ,** whose gifts include a set of pretty swell pipes, begins a month-long visit

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NIGHT LIFE—Cont'd

on Tuesday, Sept. 13. Dining. Closed Sundays.

Mikell's, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—Jazz and jazz-enriched music (jazz-rock, Latin jazz, jazz-funk) to eat and drink to. **ART BLAKEY,** the old hard-bop kingpin long famous for his press rolls and for the musicians who have worked under him, will be here Friday and Saturday, Sept. 9-10, with his youthful followers, the **JAZZ MESSENGERS.** Music from about ten until two. Dining.

Red Blazer Too, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—Traditional jazz (big- and little-band Swing, several varieties of Dixieland) in the theatre district, and not a bad place to calm down in if, for instance, you happen to have just dropped a week's wages by taking the missus and your aunt from Macon to see a Broadway musical. Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

Ritz, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Rock and roll of the present moment—and occasionally of the Classical Era (the fifties), the Romantic Era (the sixties), and the OPEC Era (the seventies)—in a big, fancy thirties-era ballroom. The **SUGARCUBES,** surely the only Icelandic rock group (two girls, four boys) to make the American pop charts, perform on Sunday, Sept. 11. The Sugarcubes' favorite subject is most rock bands' favorite subject—sex—and they treat it in a way that could be described as exotic, mixing creepiness with innocence and spiritual longing with heavy breathing. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at nine, and Fridays and Saturdays at eleven.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A musical melting pot: samba bands, African pop bands, reggae people, zydeco outfits, and salsa ensembles all pass through this former luncheonette. **KING SUNNY ADÉ,** the Nigerian pop star whose juju music (blending talking drums and gospelly voices with buzzing electric guitars) is all polyrhythmic sweetness and light, will be here Wednesday and Thursday, Sept. 7-8; the **MIGHTY SPARROW,** a pop-calypso crooner, holds forth Friday and Saturday, Sept. 9-10. Music from nine Wednesdays and Thursdays, and from ten Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesday, Sept. 6.

Speakeasy, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—The site, many moons ago, of Rienzi's, a coffeehouse on the beaten path; nowadays it's home to folkies, blues people, bluegrass fiddlers, lonesome cowboys, and a stray rock person or two. **SCOTT KEMPNER,** the chief voice of the Del-Lords, a Gotham rock-and-roll band whose homely tunes deal with the dispossessed and the drugged-out, goes acoustic on Saturday, Sept. 10; **MIKE MARSHALL,** a young "newgrass" mandolinist, heads up a quartet on Sunday, Sept. 11. Music from about eight-thirty. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—A knotty-pine-and-brick-walled *boîte*, crowded with jazz fans from Japan, France, Germany, Denmark, Greenwich Village, and other countries. Pianist **MC COY TYNER** gives his listeners a lot of bang for their bucks—the sheer volume of notes is dizzying—and his sidemen, bassist **AVERY SHARPE** and drummer **LOUIS HAYES,** thunder along with him. They play nightly except Mondays, when **ART BLAKEY'S** men have the floor. Tee-off time is ten. Dining.

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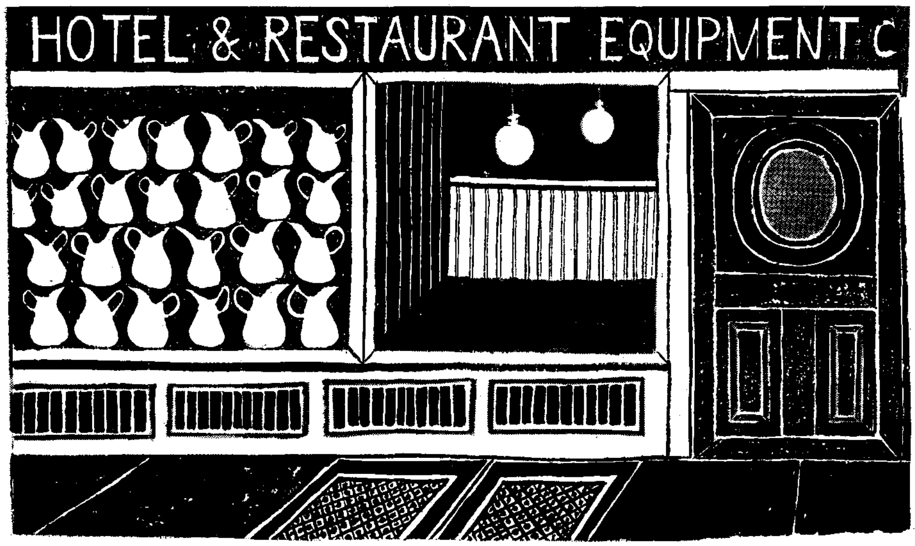
Village Gate, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the downstairs room, which is as big and plain as a mess hall, Mondays after nine are set aside for salsa bands. On Sept. 12, ensembles run by **WILLIE COLÓN** and **MARIO RIVERA** will be on hand, along with singer and yodeller **LEON THOMAS.** On Friday and Saturday, Sept. 9-10, bassist **CHARLIE HADEN** brings in his **LIBERATION MUSIC ORCHESTRA,** a quasi-political, quasi-free-jazz operation that he founded in the late sixties and that plays liberation-movement anthems and original material. **CARLA BLEY** arranges most of the tunes. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Perhaps the most famous basement in the world, now in its second half century, this establishment has been described by Max Gordon, the wise, elfin, cigar-smoking proprietor, as "a good joint that people like to come to—thank God." Two former Mingus hands—tenor saxophonist **GEORGE ADAMS** and pianist **DON PULLEN**—co-pilot a quartet Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 6-11; **CAMERON BROWN** is on bass and **LEWIS NASH** is on drums (he replaces the late Dannie Richmond, who served with Mingus for the better part of two decades and with this band for nearly ten years). On Tuesday, Sept. 13, **TOMMY FLANAGAN,** one of the wonders of bop piano, descends the stairs with his trio. Mondays are reserved for the **MEL LEWIS** big band. Music after ten.

West End, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—A Columbia University watering hole, with a room set aside for jazz scholars. In the seventies, it served as a home for famous, elderly Swing men; nowadays most of the musicians are tenured professors of modernism. **IRENE REID,** a Georgia-born singer who came up in the forties as a Dinah Washington admirer and later passed through the Basie band, performs Wednesday through Sunday, Sept. 7-11. Music from about nine. Dining.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—A bright, spacious, lightly forested bar and restaurant with an in-between room from which music issues, putting an end to some discussions and inspiring others. Pianist **JANE JARVIS** and bassist **MILT HINTON** are on duty Tuesdays through Saturdays. Sundays are once again in the graceful hands of guitarist **GENE BERTONCINI** and bassist **MICHAEL MOORE.** Music weeknights from eight, and Sundays from seven.



JAZZ / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES / PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Sade—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 5-6, at 8.

Tangerine Dream—With Andy Summers. (Radio City Music Hall. Wednesday, Sept. 7, at 8.)

Paul Zaloom—Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Wednesday through Saturday, Sept. 7-10, and Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 8, and Sunday, Sept. 11, at 3. Through Sunday, Sept. 25.

Jim Neu—In his play "An Evening with Jesse James." (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Friday, Sept. 9, at 8; Saturday, Sept. 10, at 10; and Sunday, Sept. 11, at 8. Through Sunday, Sept. 25.)

Debbie Gibson—With Times Two. (Radio City Music Hall. Friday through Sunday, Sept. 9-11, at 8.)

Dwight Yoakam—With Buck Owens. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Saturday, Sept. 10, at 8.)

Grateful Dead—Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 7:30. Through Saturday, Sept. 24.

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES

José Campeche (1751-1809)—A Puerto Rican who recorded the high society of San Juan in his portraits. Forty-seven of his paintings are currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum. Through Sept. 25. (Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St. Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

Rona Pondick—An installation of beds constructed with satin, wood, lead, and bronze. Through Oct. 1. (Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St.)

Group Shows—At the **DAVIS,** 568 Broadway: A collection of unpainted metal wall sculptures by Lisa Hoke, Jannis Kounellis, Donald Judd, and others. Through Oct. 1. . . . **GRAHAM,** 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: Paintings from the thirties and forties by Eleanor de Laittre, Alice Trumbull Mason, and Agnes Weinrich, among others. Through Oct. 1. . . . **HERSTAND,** 24 W. 57th St.: Sculptures and drawings by Constantin Brancusi, Isamu Noguchi, and Jenny Lee, among others. Through Sept. 24.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Joan Fontcuberta—Photographs by an artist whose work is collaged and frottaged. Through Saturday, Sept. 10. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Robert Mapplethorpe—The Whitney Museum has mounted a show of his photographs. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Collaboration in Recent American Photography," including works by Laurie Simmons and Allan McCollum, Clegg & Guttmann, and Suzanne Hellmuth and Jock Reynolds. . . . ¶ Photographs of North Korea by Hiroji Kubota, a Japanese photographer. Both shows through Sunday, Sept. 11. (Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A selection of watercolors and drawings by Paul Cézanne from the last thirty years of his life. Starts Tuesday, Sept. 6. . . . ¶ Arata Isozsaki's study of the entrance for the Mu-

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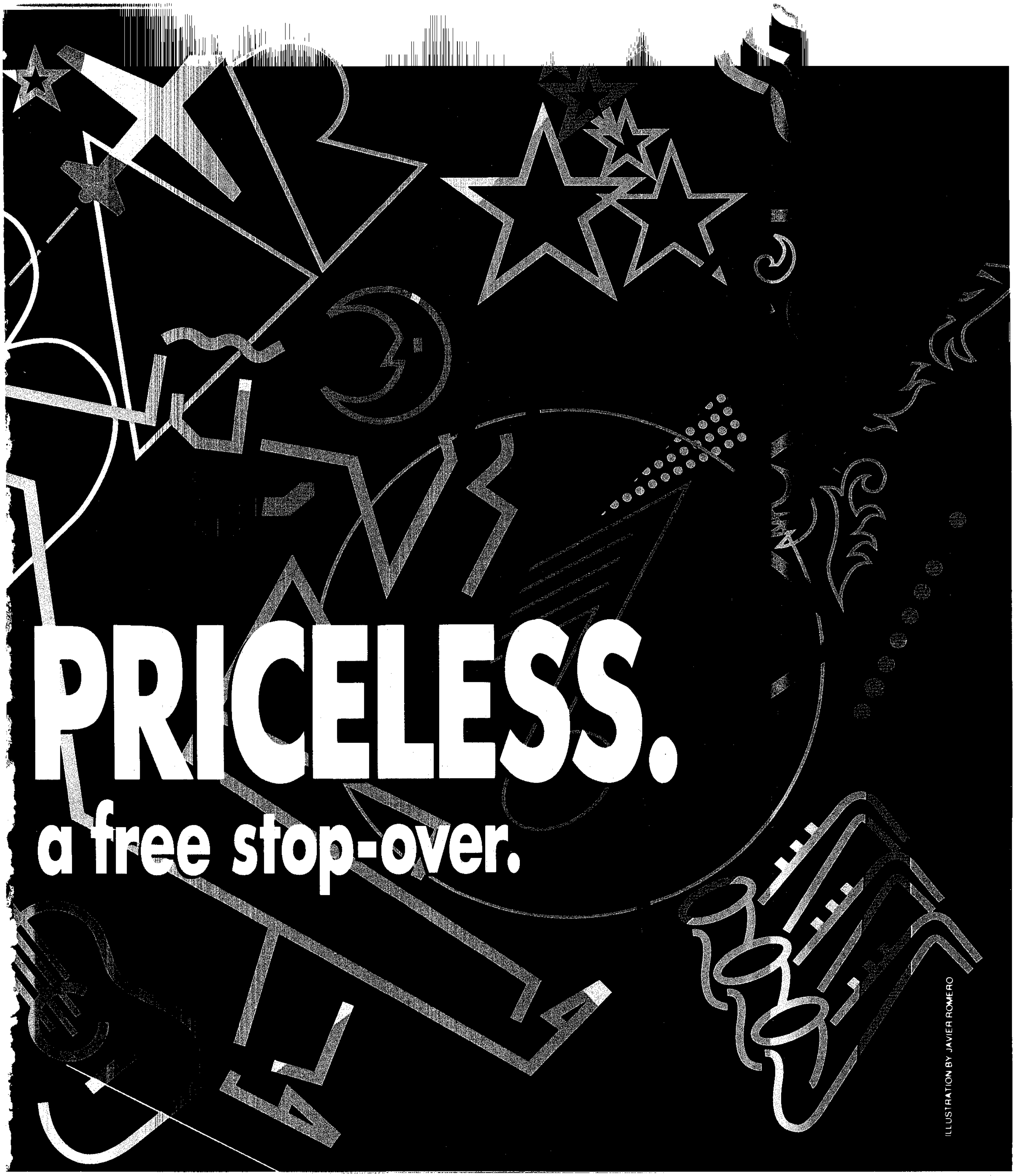

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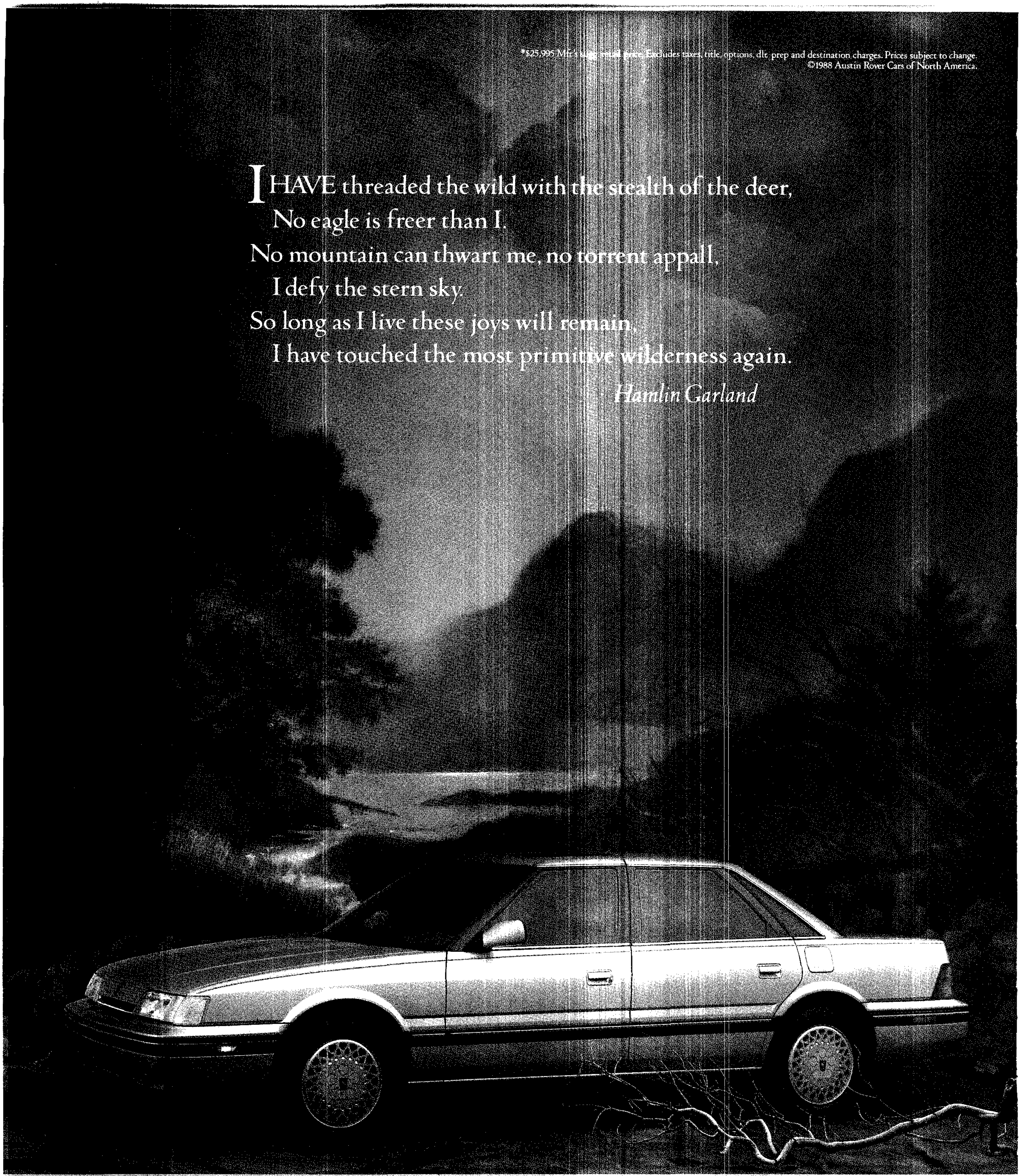

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ART–Cont'd

seum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles is among the acquisitions of architectural drawings, prints, and books on display; others range from the sixteenth century to the present and come from Europe and America. Starts Thursday, Sept. 8. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—A comprehensive show of the drawings of Philip Guston, a leading Abstract Expressionist, who, late in his career, did a series of controversial works inventorying his studio and himself. Starts Thursday, Sept. 8. (Open daily except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A retrospective of works by Georges Braque. Through Sunday, Sept. 11. . . . ¶ A loan show of sixty modern paintings from the National Gallery in Prague, consisting entirely of works that are in America for the first time. The artists include Cézanne, Chagall, Klimt, Gauguin, and Matisse, and their Czech counterparts. Through Sept. 18. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Frank Gehry's architecture is surveyed in more than two hundred and fifty drawings, photographs, and models. The projects represented include the Fishdance Restaurant in Kobe, Japan, and the Laser Laboratory Building at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Also on display are several walk-through constructions. Through Oct. 2. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Fifteen years' worth of Robert Mapplethorpe's prints are represented in a show of nudes, portraits, and still-lifes. Through Oct. 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Uses of Photography in Contemporary Art," a small exhibit from the permanent collection, with works by Julie Wachtel, Ellen Carey, and David Hockney. Through Oct. 10. . . . ¶ Photographs Walter Rosenblum took in Haiti in 1958 and 1959. Through Wednesday, Sept. 7. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Fossils from China—including several dicynodonts that are about two hundred and fifty million years old—along with some of their North American counterparts taken from the museum's collection. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—In the seventeenth century, the cupboards and drawers of Burghley House, in Devonshire, were filled with Renaissance jewelry, pitchers with diamonds and rubies embedded in them, and gold and silver tableware. Sixty of these objets de vertu, preserved as heirlooms, have been brought here for display. Starts Tuesday, Sept. 6. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St.—A retrospective *of etchings, woodcuts, and lithographs* by the English painter Graham Sutherland (1903-1980). The prints range from pastoral landscapes to expressionistic renderings of birds and insects. Through Sept. 30. (Open Mondays, except Labor Day, through Fridays, 10 to 5.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—An exhibit of roughly a hundred music scores by, among others, Bach, Mahler, Arthur Sullivan, and Mozart (several by the last; the work on view that he composed at the age of five is in his father's hand). . . . ¶ A display of illuminated *manuscripts* that depict medieval and Renaissance dances and musical instruments. Both shows start Tuesday, Sept. 6. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10:30 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Sixty Dutch and Flemish paintings, all on loan from private collections, including Van Dyck's "Apostle Peter" and "Apostle Thomas," and Frans Hals' "Portrait of Samuel Ampzing." Through Sept. 25. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5.)

MUSIC

New York City Opera—Tuesday through Sunday, Sept. 6-11: "Naughty Marietta," with alternating casts; conducted by Scott Bergeson. . . . ¶ Wednesday, Sept. 14: "Madame Butterfly," with Young Mi Kim, Cynthia Rose, Stefano Algieri, and William Parcher; Scott Bergeson. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. *Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 1.* Through Sunday, Nov. 20.)

New York Philharmonic—Zubin Mehta conducting a nonsubscription concert for the benefit of the Philharmonic. Isaac Stern will be the soloist in Beethoven's Violin Concerto. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 7:30.)

Brooklyn Philharmonic—Lukas Foss conducting, with Caroline Stoessinger, piano; Humbert Lucarelli, oboe; and Lucille Beer, mezzo-soprano. Also, Eli Wallach and Anne Jackson will read from Shakespeare. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Monday, Sept. 5, at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Amato Opera—Presenting the American première of Carlos Gomes's 1889 opera "Lo Schiavo." (Marymount Manhattan Theatre, 221 E. 71st St. Saturdays, Sept. 10 and Sept. 17, at 7:30, and Sundays, Sept. 11 and Sept. 18, at 2:30. For information about tickets, call 228-8200.)

Dvořák Birthday Concert—Chamber music, with Charles Treger, violin; Faith Esham, soprano; Paul Tobias, cello; the Dorian Wind Quintet; and others. (Cathedral of St. John the Divine, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Saturday, Sept. 10, at 7:30. No tickets necessary.)

Judith Farris—Contralto. (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Tuesday, Sept. 13, at 8.)

Neil Rutman—Piano. Tony Randall, in the role of the narrator, will join the pianist for Poulenc's "The Story of Babar the Little Elephant." (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911. Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 8.)

SPORTS

(The ticket-information number for the Meadowlands is 1-201 935-3900, for Shea Stadium 1-718 507-8499, and for Yankee Stadium 293-6000.)

Baseball—YANKEES at Yankee Stadium: Vs. Cleveland, Monday, Sept. 5, at 4:05, and Tuesday and Wednesday, Sept. 6-7, at 7:30. . . . ¶ Detroit, Thursday and Friday, Sept. 8-9, at 7:30; Saturday, Sept. 10, at 2:20; and Sunday, Sept. 11, at 1:30. . . . **METS** at Shea Stadium: Vs. Pittsburgh, Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 12-13, at 7:35. . . . ¶ Chicago, Wednesday, Sept. 14, at 7:35.

Football—At Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands—Giants vs. Washington Redskins, Monday, Sept. 5, at 9. . . . ¶ Giants vs. San Francisco Forty-Niners, Sunday, Sept. 11, at 1.

Racing—At **BELMONT:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1; through Monday, Oct. 17. The Jerome Handicap, Monday, Sept. 5, and the Maskette, Saturday, Sept. 10. . . . **MEADOWLANDS:** Weeknights at 7:30.

Tennis—United States Open Championships. (U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadow. Monday through Thursday, Sept. 5-8, at 11 and 7:30; Friday and Saturday, Sept. 9-10, at 11; and Sunday, Sept. 11, at noon. For information about tickets, call 1-718 271-5100.)

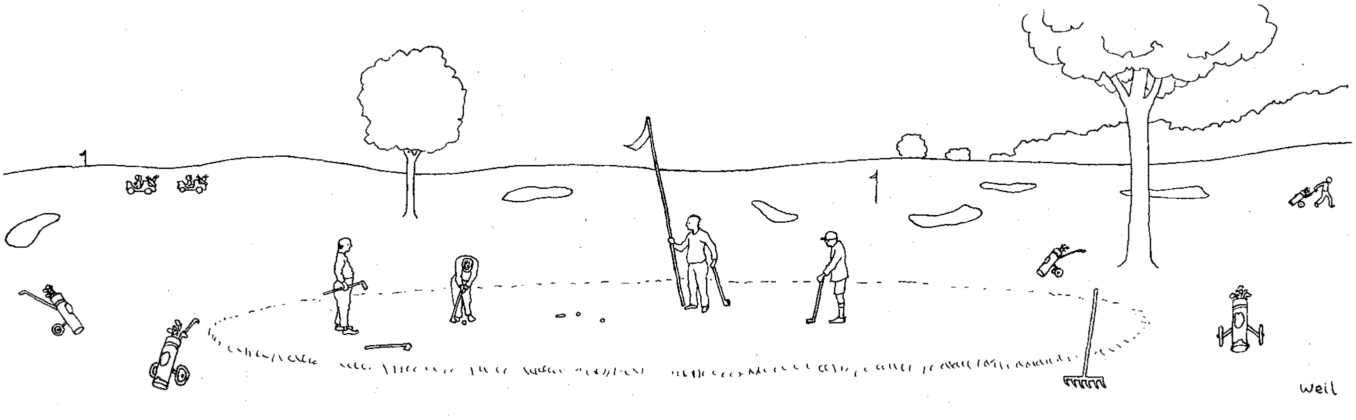
Trotting—At Yonkers Raceway: Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8.

Yachting—America's Cup XXVII: Stars & Stripes vs. New Zealand. (Off Point Loma, San Diego. Wednesday, Sept. 7; Friday, Sept. 9; and, if necessary, Sunday, Sept. 11.)

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Music Festival on the Pier—The Miller beer people's summer series. Wednesday, Sept. 7: Steel Pulse (postponed from July 8). . . . ¶ Friday, Sept. 9: Santana. . . . ¶ Saturday, Sept. 10: Iggy Pop. (Pier 84, Twelfth Ave. at 45th St. Evenings at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 249-8870.)

Washington Square Outdoor Art Exhibit—The semiannual show will be on view Saturdays and Sundays, Sept. 10-11 and 17-18, from noon until sundown.



GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
Through Sept. 8: (Separate admissions) "Coverup: Behind the Iran-Contra Affair" (directed by Barbara Trent), a documentary; and "Don Giovanni" (1979; Joseph Losey; in Italian), with Ruggero Raimondi.
From Sept. 9: "Doc's Kingdom" (Robert Kramer), with Paul McIsaac and Vincent Gallo.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 8: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker. From Sept. 9: "Running on Empty" (Sidney Lumet), with Christine Lahti, River Phoenix, Judd Hirsch, and Martha Plimpton.
Theatre 3: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through Sept. 8: "Die Hard" (†).
From Sept. 9: "Moon Over Parador" (Paul Mazursky), with Richard Dreyfuss, Raul Julia, and Sonia Braga.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Married to the Mob" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).
Theatre 3: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Sept. 8: (Matinées only) "Hot to Trot" (Michael Dinner); and (evenings only) "Hero and the Terror" (William Tannen), with Chuck Norris.
From Sept. 9: To be announced.

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"The Deceivers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Big" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
"Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Midnight Run" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 8: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon. From Sept. 9: To be announced.

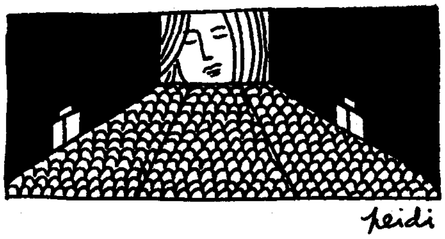
D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Sept. 8: "Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue.
From Sept. 9: "Track 29" (Nicolas Roeg), with Theresa Russell and Gary Oldman.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 8: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†). From Sept. 9: "Running on Empty" (Sidney Lumet), with Christine Lahti, River Phoenix, Judd Hirsch, and Martha Plimpton.

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 5: "Pascali's Island" (James Dearden), with Ben Kingsley, Charles Dance, and Helen Mirren. From Sept. 6: Theatre temporarily closed.
Theatre 2: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: (Matinées only) "Bravestarr, the Movie" (Tom Tataranowicz); and (evenings only) "Bull Durham" (†).
Theatre 2: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
Through Sept. 8: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker.
From Sept. 9: "Moon Over Parador" (Paul Mazursky), with Richard Dreyfuss, Raul Julia, and Sonia Braga.



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FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 16.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Married to the Mob" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mr. North" (Danny Huston), with Anthony Edwards.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
"Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.
Theatre 2: "Coming to America" (John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 2: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 13: "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" (1987; directed by Christopher Rawlence). From Sept. 14: "The Love Child" (1987; Robert Smith).
Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

Bleecker St. Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "Bull Durham" (†).
Theatre 2: "The Beer Drinker's Guide to Fitness and Filmmaking" (Fred G. Sullivan).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 8: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon. From Sept. 9: To be announced.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Through Sept. 8: (Matinées only) "Hot to Trot" (Michael Dinner); and (evenings only) "The Year My Voice Broke" (John Duigan).
From Sept. 9: To be announced.

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 8: "Big" (†). From Sept. 9: "Moon Over Parador" (Paul Mazursky), with Richard Dreyfuss, Raul Julia, and Sonia Braga.
Theatre 2: "Midnight Run" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "The Wash" (Michael Toshiyuki Uno).
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 8: "A Handful of Dust" (†). From Sept. 9: "Track 29" (Nicolas Roeg), with Theresa Russell and Gary Oldman.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 8: "Alice" (†). From Sept. 9: "The Deceivers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan.
Theatre 4: "A World Apart" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 8: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund. From Sept. 9: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 8: "Midnight Run" (†). From Sept. 9: To be announced.
Theatre 3: Through Sept. 8: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez. From Sept. 9: To be announced.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Last Temptation of Christ" (†).

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through Sept. 5: "A Handful of Dust" (†).
From Sept. 6: "Pascali's Island" (James Dearden), with Ben Kingsley, Charles Dance, and Helen Mirren.

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Wizard of Loneliness" (Jenny Bowen), with Lukas Haas.

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
Through Sept. 8: "A Summer Story" (Piers Haggard), with Imogen Stubbs and James Wilby.
From Sept. 9: "Moon Over Parador" (Paul Mazursky), with Richard Dreyfuss, Raul Julia, and Sonia Braga.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Au Revoir les Enfants" ("Goodbye, Children") (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
"Bandits" (Claude Lelouch; in French).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
Through Sept. 8: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez.
From Sept. 9: To be announced.

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"Eight Men Out" (John Sayles).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: "The Thin Blue Line" (†).
Theatre 2: "Bagdad Café" (†).
Theatre 3: "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" ("L'Ami de Mon Amie") (†).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Babette's Feast" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wings of Desire" ("Der Himmel über Berlin") (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
"Rocket Gibraltar" (Daniel Petrie), with Burt Lancaster.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).
Theatre 3: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.
Theatre 4: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).
Theatre 5: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.
Theatre 6: "Married to the Mob" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 8: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker. From Sept. 9: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 8: (Matinées only) "Hot to Trot" (Michael Dinner); and (evenings only) "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon. From Sept. 9: "Moon Over Parador" (Paul Mazursky), with Richard Dreyfuss, Raul Julia, and Sonia Braga.

Columbia Cinema, B'way at 103rd. (316-6660)
"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 8: "Midnight Run" (†). From Sept. 9: To be announced.
Theatre 2: Through Sept. 8: "Die Hard" (†). From Sept. 9: "Running on Empty" (Sidney Lumet), with Christine Lahti, River Phoenix, Judd Hirsch, and Martha Plimpton.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Coming to America" (directed by John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez.
Theatre 3: "The Blob" (Chuck Russell), with Kevin Dillon and Shawnee Smith.
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 8: (Matinées only) "Bravestarr, the Movie" (Tom Tataranowicz); and (evenings only) "Hot to Trot" (Michael Dinner). From Sept. 9: "Defense Play."
Theatre 5: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 6: "Hero and the Terror" (William Tannen), with Chuck Norris.

Embassy 1, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
"Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Married to the Mob" (†).
Theatre 3: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).
Theatre 4: Through Sept. 8: "Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue. From Sept. 9: "The Deceivers" (Nicholas Meyer), with Pierce Brosnan.

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
"Freeway" (Francis Delia).

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: Through Sept. 8: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon. From Sept. 9: "Running on Empty" (Sidney Lumet), with Christine Lahti, River Phoenix, Judd Hirsch, and Martha Plimpton.
Theatre 2: "Midnight Run" (†).

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
Through Sept. 8: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker.
From Sept. 9: To be announced.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Sept. 5: "Broadway Melody of 1940" (1940; directed by Norman Taurog), with Fred Astaire, Eleanor Powell, and George Murphy; and "Ziegfeld Follies" (1944; Vincente Minnelli), with Fred Astaire, Judy Garland, and Gene Kelly.
Sept. 6-7: "Royal Wedding" (1951; Stanley Donen), with Fred Astaire, Jane Powell, and Peter Lawford; and "Yolanda and the Thief" (1945; Vincente Minnelli), with Fred Astaire and Lucille Bremer. On Sept. 6 at 7:55, composer Burton Lane will be present.
Sept. 8-10: "Easter Parade" (†) and "Follow the Fleet" (†).
Sept. 11-13: "Bringing Up Baby" (1938; Howard Hawks), with Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, and Charles Ruggles; and "Holiday" (1938 †).
From Sept. 14: "The Lady Eve" (1941; Preston Sturges), with Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, and Charles Coburn; and "Hail the Conquering Hero" (†).

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Sept. 6: Two programs of Warner Brothers cartoons shown each day.
Sept. 7-8: "The Family" (1988; Ettore Scola; in Italian), with Vittorio Gassman, Fanny Ardant, Stefania Sandrelli, and Philippe Noiret; and "Three Brothers" (1982; Francesco Rosi; in Italian), with Philippe Noiret, Michele Placido, and Vittorio Mezzogiorno.
Sept. 9-10: "Andy Warhol's Frankenstein" (1974) and "Andy Warhol's Dracula" (1975), both films directed by Paul Morrissey, with Joe Dallesandro.
Sept. 11: "The Gospel According to St. Matthew" (1966; Pier Paolo Pasolini; in Italian), with a cast of nonprofessionals; and "St. Augustine of Hippo" (1972; Roberto Rossellini; in Italian).
Sept. 12-13: "The Maltese Falcon" (1941 †) and "Casablanca" (†).
From Sept. 14: "The Long Goodbye" (†) and "Chinatown" (†).

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Sept. 5: "Cat Women of the Moon" (1953; Arthur Hilton), with Sonny Tufts and Marie Windsor; "Frankenstein's Daughter" (1958; Richard Cunha), with John Ashley and Sandra Knight; and "Missile to the Moon" (1958; Richard Cunha), with Richard Travis, Cathy Downs, and K. T. Stevens.
Sept. 6: "Galaxy Express" (1979), a Japanese animated film; and "Message from Space" (1978; Kinji Fukasaku), with Vic Morrow and Sonny Chiba.
Sept. 7: "The Giant Behemoth" (1959; Douglas Hickok and Eugène Lourié), with Gene Evans; and "Gorgo" (1961; Eugène Lourié), with Bill Travers.
Sept. 8: "The Day the World Ended" (1955; Roger Corman), with Richard Denning and Lori Nelson; "Attack of the Crab Monsters" (1957; Roger Corman), with Richard Garland; and "Monster from the Ocean Floor" (1954; Wyott Ordung), with Anne Kimbell.
Sept. 9-11: "The Tingler" (1960; William Castle), with Vincent Price; and "13 Ghosts" (1960; William Castle), with Rosemary DeCamp and Donald Woods.
Sept. 12-13: "Mr. Sardonicus" (1961; William Castle), with Oscar Homolka; and "Homicidal" (1961; William Castle), with Glenn Corbett.
Sept. 14: "Chamber of Horrors" (1966; Hy Averback), with Cesare Danova and Wilfrid Hyde-White; and "Wicked, Wicked" (1973; Richard L. Bare), with David Bailey.

Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Sept. 5: "Man Facing Southeast" (1987; Eliseo Subiela; an Argentine film, in Spanish); and "The Day the Earth Stood Still" (1951; Robert Wise), with Michael Rennie, Patricia Neal, and Hugh Marlowe.
Sept. 6: "House of Games" (1987; David Mamet), with Lindsay Crouse and Joe Mantegna; and "The Verdict" (1982; Sidney Lumet), with Paul Newman.
Sept. 7: "The Animals Film" (1988), a documentary.
Sept. 8: "Ministry of Fear" (†); and "Cloak and Dagger" (1946; Fritz Lang), with Gary Cooper and Lilli Palmer.
Sept. 9-10: "Death of the President" (1977; Jerzy Kawalerowicz; in Polish); and "The Wedding" (1972; Andrzej Wajda; in Polish).
Sept. 11: "A Married Woman" (1965; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Macha Meril; and "My Life to Live" (1962; Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Anna Karina.
Sept. 12: "Come and See" (1987; Elem Klimov).
Sept. 13: "Women in Love" (1970; Ken Russell), with Alan Bates, Oliver Reed, Glenda Jackson, and Jennie Linden; and "Crimes

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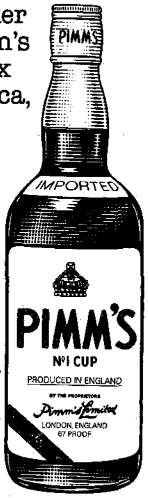

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ONLY WINNING
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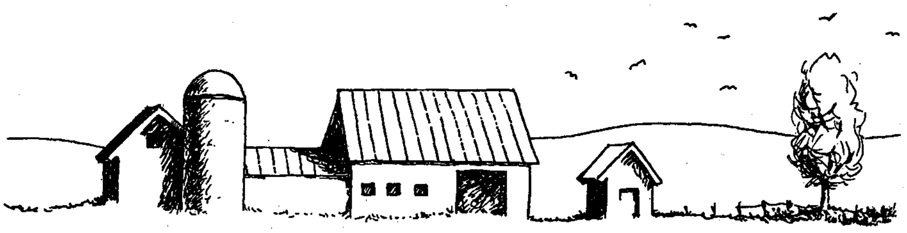


MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

of Passion" (1984; Ken Russell), with Kathleen Turner and Anthony Perkins.

Sept. 14: "Judgment at Nuremberg" (†); and "The Wannsee Conference" (1987; Heinz Schirk; in German).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400).

Sept. 5: "It Happened One Night" (1934; Frank Capra), with Claudette Colbert, Clark Gable, Walter Connolly, Roscoe Karns, and Alan Hale; and "Twentieth Century" (1934; Howard Hawks), with John Barrymore, Carole Lombard, and Ralph Forbes.

Sept. 6: "Le Corbeau" ("The Raven;" 1943; Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Pierre Fresnay and Ginette Leclerc; and "The Wages of Fear" (1953; Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Folco Lulli, and Peter Van Eyck.

Sept. 7: "The Chase" (1966; Arthur Penn), with Marlon Brando, Jane Fonda, Robert Redford, and E. G. Marshall; and "The Night of the Following Day" (1969; Hubert Cornfield), with Marlon Brando, Richard Boone, and Pamela Franklin.

Sept. 8: "Mr. Skeffington" (1944; Vincent Sherman), with Bette Davis and Claude Rains; and "In This Our Life" (1942; John Huston), with Bette Davis, Olivia de Havilland, George Brent, and Dennis Morgan.

Sept. 9-10: "Shadow of the Thin Man" (†); and "Song of the Thin Man" (1947; Edward Buzzell), with Myrna Loy and William Powell.

Sept. 11: "The Fugitive Kind" (1960; Sidney Lumet), with Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani, and Joanne Woodward; and "One-Eyed Jacks" (†).

Sept. 12: "Los Olvidados" (†); and "Viridiana" (1961; Luis Buñuel; in Spanish), with Francisco Rabal and Silvia Pinal.

Sept. 13: "The Guardsman" (†) and "Idiot's Delight" (†).

Sept. 14: "Cyrano de Bergerac" (†) and "Adventures of Don Juan" (†).

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing.)

Theatre 1: Sept. 5 at 2: "After Tomorrow" (1932; directed by Frank Borzage), with Charles Farrell, Marian Nixon, and Minna Gombell. . . . ¶ Sept. 5 at 5: "I Believed in You" (1934; Irving Cummings), with Victor Jory, Rosemary Ames, and John Boles. . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at 2:30: "It Happened Tomorrow" (1944; René Clair), with Dick Powell, Linda Darnell, and Jack Oakie. . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at 6: "After Tomorrow." . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 2:30: "Follow Thru" (1930; Laurence Schwab and Lloyd Corrigan), with Nancy Carroll, Charles Rogers, and Jack Haley. . . . ¶ Sept. 8 at 6: "It Happened Tomorrow." . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 2:30: "I Believed in You." . . . ¶ Sept. 9 at 6: "Follow Thru." . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 1: "The Bells Go Down" (1943; Basil Dearden), with James Mason, Mervyn Johns, and Tommy Trinder. . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 3: "For Freedom" (1940; Maurice Elvey and Castleton Knight), with Will Fyffe and Anthony Hulme. . . . ¶ Sept. 10 at 5: "Fires Were Started" (1943; Humphrey Jennings). . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 1: "The Common Touch" (1941; John Baxter), with Geoffrey Hibbert, Raymond Lovell, and Greta Gynt. . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 3: "The Shipbuilders" (1943; John Baxter), with Clive Brook, Geoffrey Hibbert, and Morland Graham. . . . ¶ Sept. 11 at 5: "Love on the Dole" (1941; John Baxter), with Deborah Kerr, Clifford Evans, and Joyce Howard. . . . ¶ Sept. 12 at 2:30: "Fires Were Started." . . . ¶ Sept. 12 at 6: "The Bells Go Down." . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 2:30: "The Common Touch." . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 6: "For Freedom."

Theatre 2: *Theatre closed.*

Museum of Broadcasting, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—Through Oct. 6: "Woody Allen: The Television Work," featuring "The Kraft Music Hall: Woody Allen Looks at 1967" and a compilation of performances by and conversations with Allen from 1962 to 1977. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 12:05, 1:45, and 3:30. . . . ¶ Sept. 6 at 5:30: Cole Porter's "Aladdin" (1958; Ralph Nelson), with Sal Mineo, Cyril Ritchard, Basil Rathbone, and Anna Maria Alberghetti. . . . ¶ Sept. 13 at 5:30: "Bell Telephone Hour: The Music of Cole Porter" (1964), with Ethel Merman, John Raitt, and others.

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria. (1-718 784-0077)—This new museum, devoted to the art, history, and technology of film, television, and video, will open Saturday, Sept. 10, with a permanent exhibition called "Behind the Screen: Producing, Promoting, and Exhibiting Motion Pictures and Television," which includes "Tut's Fever," an installation by Red Grooms and Lysiane Luong. The museum's two movie theatres will open the same day. (Museum hours: Wednesdays and Thursdays, 1 to 5; Fridays, 1 to 8; Saturdays, 10 to 8; and Sundays, 10 to 5.)

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Penelope Gilliatt and Terrence Rafferty.)

Adventures of Don Juan (1948)—By this time, Errol Flynn's offscreen life had colored the public's view of him, and this wry, semi-satirical swashbuckler was designed to exploit his reputation for debauchery. William Faulkner and Frederick Faust (Max Brand) were among the writers whom the Warners producer, Jerry Wald, brought in to work on various drafts of the screenplay, which was finally credited to George Oppenheimer and Harry Kurnitz. Flynn looks far from his best, and the whole lavish production has a somewhat depressed tone. The story has Juan saving Queen Margaret of Spain (Viveca Lindfors) from a traitor's skulduggery. With Romney Brent, Ann Rutherford, Alan Hale, Robert Warwick, Robert Douglas, Helen Westcott, Raymond Burr, Una O'Connor, Fortunio Bonanova, and Monte Blue. Those with keen eyes may spot bits of footage lifted from "The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex" and "The Adventures of Robin Hood." The director Vincent Sherman's work is no more than adequate. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 14.)

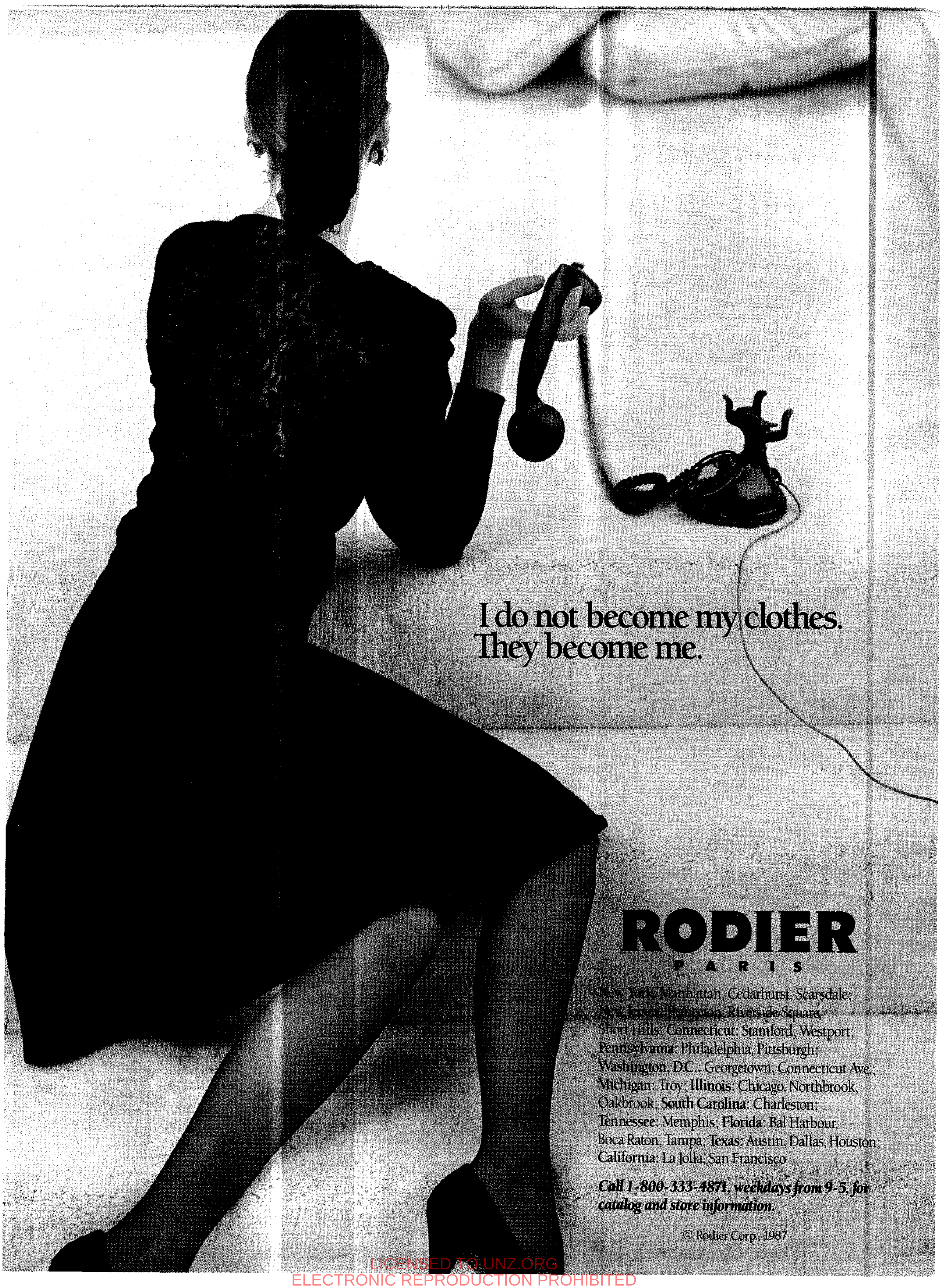
Alice—The Czech animator Jan Švankmajer plays with objects the way Lewis Carroll played with words. He animates household items and worn-looking dolls, makes nonsense physical, palpable, and thus gives Alice's adventures in illogic an undertone of menace. The director—a self-described "militant Surrealist," who has been making short films since 1964—brings a pessimistic, absurdist, Eastern European sensibility to bear on Carroll's material, and his approach sometimes seems overly formal, a little rigid. But this is an extraordinary piece of work. There are sequences that are small miracles of stop-motion animation: the White Rabbit has a pocket watch sewn into his tatty fur, so whenever he checks the time sawdust spills out of him and he has to close himself up with a safety pin; the Caterpillar, a woollen sock with a pair of glass eyes and a set of chattering false teeth, delivers his message to Alice and then, alarmingly, darns over his own eyes as he settles down to sleep. "Alice" is a brilliant demonstration of the connection between a child's imagination and the lonely, obsessive craftsmanship of a great animator. Alice is played by a big-eyed little girl named Kristýna Kohoutová; she's the only human being in the movie.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/8/88.) (Quad Cinema; through Sept. 8.)

Au Revoir les Enfants ("Goodbye, Children")—It's set in Occupied France in 1944, when the writer-director Louis Malle was an eleven-year-old at a Catholic boys' boarding school near Fontainebleau that sheltered several Jewish boys. The Gestapo learned they were there, and sent the ones they found to Auschwitz, and the headmaster to a work camp. One of the Jewish boys was in Malle's class, but Malle didn't get to know him well and didn't realize that he was Jewish. For the dramatic purposes of the movie, he has conceived a close friendship between his alter ego, the fair-haired Julien Quentin (Gaspard Manesse), and the dark boy who is using the false name Jean Bonnet (Raphaël Fejtö). But nothing comes into clear focus—not the boys' attitudes, not even the images. The film (especially the first half) seems padded, formal, discreet. It's like watching a faded French classic. And there's something unseemly about the way Jean is used as an aesthetic object—spiritual, sensitive, exotic. With Francine Racette as Julien's mother and François Négret as the informer. In French. (2/22/88) (Carnegie Screening Room.)

Babette's Feast—In a village on Denmark's gray, blustery Jutland peninsula, sometime in the eighteen-eighties, Babette (Stéphane Audran), the French servant of a pair of elderly unmarried sisters (Birgitte Federspiel and Bodil Kjer), prepares a special dinner for her employers and their guests—a lavish, one-time-only orgy of haute cuisine served to a group of devout Lutherans who are used to receiving the Lord's bounty in the form of grim little slabs of boiled fish. Adapting one of Isak Dinesen's "Anecdotes of Destiny," Gabriel Axel, the writer-director, tells this simple tale simply. He establishes a lulling, bedtime-story tone right from the start, perhaps too successfully: our eyelids begin to seem very heavy after twenty minutes or so. The whole thing turns out to be about the consolations of art, and the union of "righteousness and bliss." The film is more righteous than blissful: a more austere celebration of the pleasures of the senses would be difficult to imagine. In Danish and French.—T.R. (Cinema Studio.)

Bagdad Café—After an argument with her husband on a godforsaken stretch of highway at the edge of the Mojave Desert, a fat German tourist named Jasmin (Marianne Sägebrecht) checks into a crummy motel attached to the equally crummy Bagdad Café. This movie, the first in English by the German director Percy Adlon (whose 1985 "Sugarbaby" was also a vehicle for Sägebrecht), is filled with eccentrics who are apparently meant to be lovable. The rather precious conceit of the film is that Jasmin somehow brings the outcast characters together in a kind of extended family; by the end, the Bagdad Café has been transformed into a popular roadside cabaret, with everyone contributing a specialty (Jasmin does magic tricks). The American performers are trapped in a movie that treats them as merely exotic—waxwork grotesques waiting to be animated by a mysterious German touch. Eleonore Adlon and Christopher Doherty collaborated with the director on the screenplay. With CCH Pounder, Jack Palance, and Christine Kaufmann.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

Big—A formula fantasy film that has been directed very gently and tactfully by Penny Marshall; she sleepwalks you through the script (by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg) about a twelve-year-old boy who wishes he were big and is magically given the body of a man in his thirties—Tom Hanks. There are neat, flaky moments, but everything has a tepid inevitability, and even as you smile you may be groaning inwardly, because "Big" is dedicated to awakening the child in all of us. Of course, the Hanks character isn't ready to function as an adult; he wants to go back. The movie wants to go back, too. It's nostalgic for childhood, for suburbia, for innocent fun. (It isn't about kids wanting to be big; it's about grownups feeling little.) In its wholesome way, "Big" is selling the slick wonders of immaturity. With the slyly sexy Elizabeth Perkins, and good comic work by Robert Loggia and Jared Rushton. Also with John Heard, David Moscow, Jon Lovitz, and Mercedes Ruehl. (6/27/88) (Gotham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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

Cinema. . . . ¶ Art Greenwich Twin; through Sept. 8.)

Boyfriends and Girlfriends ("L'Ami de Mon Amie")—The sixth, and last, in Eric Rohmer's series of "Comedies and Proverbs" is a light romantic comedy set in Cergy-Pontoise, an overdesigned and self-contained modern suburb of Paris. In this bourgeois Forest of Arden, four completely unremarkable young people—two women, two men—reshuffle their affections so that each winds up with the "right" partner in the end. It's essentially the same leisurely comedy of self-knowledge that Rohmer has been making for nearly twenty years, but this time he treats his themes with a frivolous, casual air. He takes pleasure in the cleanness and brightness of this world, in the contented buzz of shoppers and office workers and Sunday picnickers, in the forthright way his characters pursue their comforts. "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" is fluff: it's artificial without being oppressive—a graceful, friendly abstraction. With Emmanuelle Chaulet, Sophie Renoir, François-Eric Gendron, and Eric Viellard. In French.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Bull Durham—Written and directed by Ron Shelton, this sunny romantic comedy has the kind of dizzying off-center literacy that Preston Sturges' pictures had. It's a satirical celebration of our native jauntiness and wit; it takes us into a subculture that's like a bawdy adjunct of childhood—minor-league baseball. Kevin Costner plays the smart, hyperarticulate catcher Crash, and comes through with his first wide-awake, star performance; at his best, he's as berserkly ironic as Jack Nicholson is at some of his peaks. After playing for twelve years, Crash arrives in Durham, North Carolina, to join the Durham Bulls and learns that he's been brought in to train baby-faced Nuke (Tim Robbins), a wild young rookie pitcher who is destined to move up. Susan Sarandon plays the beautiful, passionate Annie Savoy, a baseball fanatic who has her own scorecard: "There's never been a ballplayer slept with me who didn't have the best year of his career." What you keep reacting to is the film's exuberant doodles. (6/27/88) (Bleecker St. Cinema. . . . ¶ Gemini. Evenings only.)

Casablanca (1942)—Ingrid Bergman became a popular favorite when Humphrey Bogart, as Rick, the most famous saloonkeeper in screen history, treated her like a whore. In the role of the cynic redeemed by love, Bogart became the great adventurer-lover of the screen during the war years. In this film, he established the figure of the rebellious hero—the lone wolf who hates and defies officialdom (and in his movies he fulfilled a universal fantasy: he got away with it). It's far from a great film, but it has a special appealingly schlocky romanticism, and you're never really pressed to take its melodramatic twists and turns seriously. The international cast includes Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, Claude Rains, Peter Lorre, S. Z. Sakall, and, memorably, Dooley Wilson, singing "As Time Goes By." (Cinema Village; Sept. 12-13.)

Chinatown (1974)—A thriller for grownups—more about greed than about blood-spilling—directed by Roman Polanski. John Huston plays a Biblical figure called Noah Cross; Faye Dunaway is a mysteriously widowed beauty called Mrs. Mulwray, who hires a private eye (Jack Nicholson) to solve the puzzle of her husband's death. The film, set in the thirties, is wickedly skillful and funny, and socially alert.—P.G. (Cinema Village; starting Sept. 14.)

Cyrano de Bergerac (1950)—José Ferrer in a mediocre version of the Edmond Rostand play, directed by Michael Gordon, with Mala Powers, William Prince, and Morris Carnovsky. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 14.)

Die Hard—A formula action picture, but with the extra-potency formula. It has the sweatiest hero, the most sinister bad guys (with the thickest foreign accents), the silliest plot twists, the loudest explosions, the most gratuitous bursts of machine-gun fire—all in 70 mm. and bowel-rumbling Dolby sound. Bruce Willis plays John McClane, a New York cop battling a group of European terrorists who are holding his wife (Bonnie Bedelia) and her co-workers hostage on the thirtieth floor of a gleaming L.A. skyscraper (actually the Fox Plaza in Century City). The action is so grandiose and relentless that it's funny. The director, John McTiernan, has the right style for this sort of cheerfully stupid, super-kinetic comic-book violence. The problem with "Die Hard" isn't so much the physical overkill of the production as the emotional overkill of the script (by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza, from a novel by Roderick Thorp). By the end, there has been so much onscreen applause for McClane that the picture's "humanity" seems narcissistic and fake, like Oscar-night sentimentality. Also with Alan Rickman, who gives the character of the terrorists' leader a wonderful slimy elegance.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Baronet, 86th Street East Twin, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema, and Olympia; through Sept. 8.)

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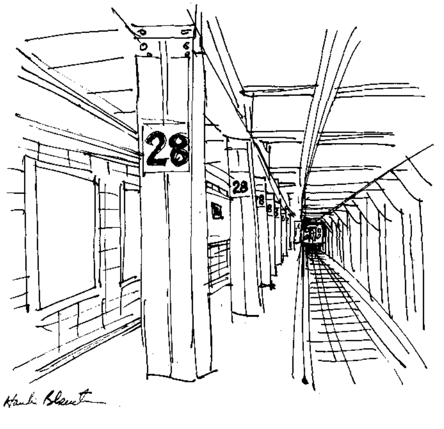
Easter Parade (1948)—There's not much comedy and not much invention in this oversize musical, but Fred Astaire and Judy Garland finally get to their great number "A Couple of Swells." With Ann Miller and Peter Lawford. Charles Walters directed; the score was by Irving Berlin. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 8-10.)

A Fish Called Wanda—This caper comedy promises to embody the best of two different styles of British humor: its director, the seventy-seven-year-old Charles Crichton, made "The Lavender Hill Mob," one of the greatest of the Ealing comedies, and its writer, executive producer, and star, the towering John Cleese, was a member of the Monty Python group and the creator of the hilarious television series "Fawlty Towers." Its main characters are a very proper London barrister (Cleese) and three jewel thieves: a crafty, sexy American woman named Wanda (Jamie Lee Curtis); another American, Otto (Kevin Kline), who's violently Anglophobic and dumb as dirt; and Ken (the ex-Pythonite Michael Palin), a deranged stutterer who's perfectly happy to bump off old ladies but becomes inconsolable at the death of a small dog or a tropical fish. The movie has a fair number of laughs, but Crichton's direction is too drab and poky for the material. Every time "Wanda" threatens to take off into the realm of insane, head-splitting farce, as "Fawlty Towers" so often did, something seems to drag it down—some impulse toward stability and restraint, at odds with the script's spirit of manic invention.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Follow the Fleet (1936)—Astaire and Rogers at their most buoyant. In this one, Astaire and Randolph Scott are (implausible) shipmates, and Rogers and Harriet Hilliard are (implausible) sisters. The material, derived from the 1922 play "Shore Leave," had grown a bit of moss. The characters aren't as rich and sophisticated as in the best-known Astaire-Rogers movies, but the corniness is lively. The numbers are mostly playful and fresh, and the Irving Berlin score includes "Let Yourself Go," "I'm Putting All My Eggs in One Basket," and the big finale, "Let's Face the Music and Dance." The cast includes Astrid Allwyn, Betty Grable, Lucille Ball, and Tony Martin. Directed by Mark Sandrich. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 8-10.)



The Guardsman (1931)—More like a photographed play than a movie adaptation, but a memento of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne at work; they appear to be having a wonderful time mugging and grinning. They play an acting couple, and for a good part of the film the jealous husband (in disguise from his flirtatious wife) wears something stuck under his lower lip, which gives him a beefy, puffed-out jaw that is irresistibly ridiculous. Sidney Franklin directed this early-talkie version of the Ferenc Molnár play, which Lunt and Fontanne had done on Broadway in 1924. The cast includes Roland Young, Ann Dvorak, ZaSu Pitts, Maude Eburne, and Herman Bing. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 13.)

Hail the Conquering Hero (1944)—Preston Sturges uses verbal slapstick as well as visual slapstick, and his timing is so quickly effective that the dialogue keeps popping off, like a string of firecrackers. In this satire on hero worship, patriotism, and mother love, Eddie Bracken, son of his town's biggest First World War hero, joins the Marines in the Second World War and is discharged for hay fever. Ashamed, he writes his mother that he's been sent overseas and, thinking he can never return home, tells his girl (Ella Raines) that he doesn't love her anymore. But one night he's out drinking with six marines, and one of them tells him he should go home and see his beautiful mother; the sergeant agrees, and the upshot is that they drag him home, claiming that he's a war hero. The town goes mad. With Freddie Steele, William Demarest, and Raymond Walburn. (Biograph Cinema; starting Sept. 14.)

A Handful of Dust—The filmmakers who have brought Evelyn Waugh's sharp, satiric 1934 novel to the screen treat it as if it were one of the writer's ponderous later works—as if it were "Brideshead Revisited." In fact, the producer, Derek Granger, and the director, Charles Sturridge, were also responsible for the plodding TV miniseries of "Brideshead" several years ago. Waugh's novel traces the decline of Tony Last, a naïve English landowner, husband, and father who is betrayed by everything and everyone he believes in—especially by his charming, shallow wife, Brenda. Although virtually all the dialogue is lifted directly from the novel, the polished cruelty rarely sounds witty. The filmmakers give the appearance of being perfectly faithful to the novel, but they're constantly betraying it. In the last half hour, though, we're treated to a brilliant performance by Alec Guinness, as the alarming Mr. Todd. Playing Tony's final betrayer, he hits the tiny notes of menace and ruthless self-interest in the lulling tones of polite English discourse: his sly, precise effects are an actor's equivalent of Waugh's sneakily devastating prose. With James Wilby (as Tony), Kristin Scott Thomas (as Brenda), Judi Dench, Rupert Graves, and Anjelica Huston. Screenplay by Granger, Sturridge, and Tim Sullivan.—T.R. (7/11/88) (Festival; through Sept. 5. . . . ¶ Quad Cinema; through Sept. 8.)

Holiday (1938)—In the thirties, Katharine Hepburn's wit and nonconformity made ordinary heroines seem mushy, and her angular beauty made the round-faced ingénues look piggy and stupid. Here she is in her archetypal role, as the rich tomboy Linda in Philip Barry's romantic comedy. She had understudied the role in 1928 on Broadway and had used it for her screen test, and she was the moving force behind this graceful film version, which George Cukor directed. In the pivotal role of a man who wants a holiday in order to discover his values, Cary Grant manages to make a likable and plausible character out of a dramatist's stratagem. With Edward Everett Horton, Jean Dixon, and Lew Ayres. (Biograph Cinema; Sept. 11-13.)

Idiot's Delight (1939)—This allegorical comedy has Clark Gable as a hoofer and Norma

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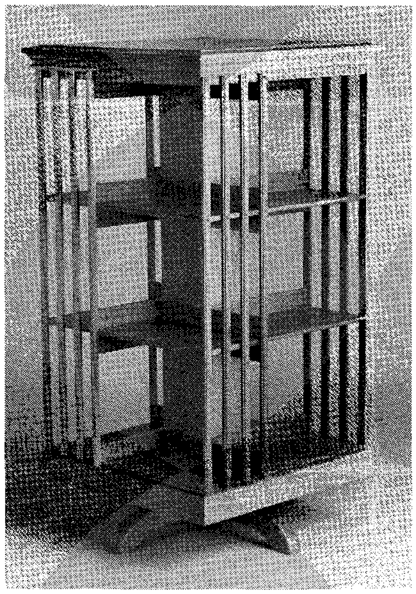

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IN BRIEF—Cont'd

Shearer as a fake Russian countess (the roles made famous on Broadway by Lunt and Fontanne). It's set in an Alpine winter-sports hotel high above a world about to be engulfed in war. The characters include a Leftist, a pair of honeymooners, and so forth, and there's got to be an anti-war message in it somewhere. Gable isn't bad (and he gets a chance to do a deliberately clunky, bedraggled dance to "Puttin' on the Ritz"), but oh, that Shearer! With Burgess Meredith, Edward Arnold, Charles Coburn, and Joseph Schildkraut. Directed by Clarence Brown, who hopelessly struggles to give this stagy material some style and impudence. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 13.)

Judgment at Nuremberg (1961)—Stanley Kramer's version of the meaning of the Nuremberg trials, from a script by Abby Mann. Spencer Tracy is the simple, humane super-judge, and the cast includes Burt Lancaster, Richard Widmark, Maximilian Schell, Marlene Dietrich, William Shatner, Werner Klemperer, and Alan Baxter. When Mann's screenplay won the Academy Award, he accepted it not only for himself "but for all intellectuals." (Thalia SoHo; Sept. 14.)

The Last Temptation of Christ—Martin Scorsese's film is based on an intense, rather ponderous novel by Nikos Kazantzakis that portrays Christ as a tormented prophet who has to choose between his human nature and his divine nature—who in order to fulfill his role as redeemer must reject the overpowering temptation to be merely a man. If we respond to anything in this movie it's to the idea of Scorsese wrestling with Kazantzakis's conception, thrashing manfully among the tangles of the novel's dense prose, trying to isolate some clear, intelligible meaning from this religious fever-dream. The director's work here has extraordinary integrity, a kind of spiritual rigor. But, despite some brilliant sequences, the movie fails. Scorsese is too reverent toward the novel, which is more than difficult—it's impossible. He hasn't managed to come up with a consistent visual style for the story, and the movie's intensity, over a span of two hours and forty minutes, is sputtering, fitful. The scenes meant to evoke the natural—the human—side of the story don't have much charge, and most of the actors look uncomfortable. (The drab modern idiom of Paul Schrader's dialogue is at least part of the problem.) The idea of Jesus agonizing over whether he would rather be human or divine is compelling enough, but its relevance is limited: this isn't a problem any of us will ever have. This movie isn't a sacrilege; it's just an honorable mistake. With Willem Dafoe as Jesus, Harvey Keitel as Judas, Barbara Hershey as Mary Magdalene, and David Bowie as Pontius Pilate. Cinematography by Michael Ballhaus. Peter Gabriel composed the music.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Ziegfeld.)

The Long Goodbye (1973)—Robert Altman's heady, whirling sideshow of a movie, which takes off from Raymond Chandler's 1953 novel, is set in the early-seventies L.A. of the stoned sensibility. Philip Marlowe (Elliott Gould) is a wryly forlorn knight, just slogging along, trying to behave like Bogart. He's the gallant fool in a corrupt world—the innocent eye. Even the police know more about the case he's involved in than he does. Yet he's the only one who *cares*. Altman tells a detective story, all right, but he does it through a spree—a high-flying rap on Chandler and the movies and L.A. Gould gives a loose and woolly, strikingly original performance. With Nina van Pallandt, Sterling Hayden, Mark Rydell, Jim Bouton, Henry Gibson, Jack Riley, and Ken Sansom. (Cinema Village; starting Sept. 14.)

The Maltese Falcon (1941)—Humphrey Bogart's most exciting role was Sam Spade, that ambiguous mixture of avarice and honor, sexuality and fear, who gave new dimensions to the detective genre. This film, the first directed by John Huston, is an almost perfect visual equivalent of the Dashiell Hammett thriller. Huston used Hammett's plot design and economical dialogue in a hard, precise directorial style that brings out the full viciousness of characters who are so ruthless and greedy that they become comic. Bogart is backed by an impeccably "right" cast: Mary Astor, Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, Gladys George, Elisha Cook, Jr., Jerome Cowan, Lee Patrick, Ward Bond, and Barton MacLane. Bogart's Spade is a man who's constantly testing himself, who doesn't want to be touched, who's obsessively anti-homosexual. Huston, by shooting the material from Spade's point of view, makes it possible for the audience to enjoy Spade's petty, sadistic victories and his sense of triumph as he proves he's tougher than anybody. (Cinema Village; Sept. 12-13.)

Married to the Mob—Angela (Michelle Pfeiffer), the heroine of Jonathan Demme's crazy comedy, is married to an up-and-coming suburban gangster known as Frank the Cucumber (Alec Baldwin), and she doesn't feel good about her life; she's avid for ordinariness. When Frank is murdered by his boss, Tony the Tiger (Dean Stockwell), Angela gives away virtually the entire contents of her Long Island house and moves herself and her reluctant son into a cramped Lower East Side apartment, hoping that the mob will forget about her. Unfortunately, Tony the Tiger has the hots for her, the F.B.I. is tailing her, and Tony's insanely jealous wife, Connie (Mercedes Ruehl), is on the warpath. Pfeiffer's extraordinary performance is the movie's major pleasure; she makes both Angela's toughness and her goodness believable, funny, and touching. As usual, Demme is great at providing incidental pleasures, including a terrific score (with original music by David Byrne) and a superbly eccentric cast that features Matthew Modine, Trey Wilson, Joan Cusack, Tracey Walter, and David Johansen (as a priest). The vibrant cinematography is by Tak Fujimoto.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Midnight Run—At first, Martin Brest's new film is content to be a pleasantly flaky buddy movie and to lean on the talents of its two stars, Robert De Niro and Charles Grodin. De Niro's Jack Walsh, an ex-cop who works for a weaselly L.A. bail bondsman (Joe Pantoliano), goes to New York to retrieve a white-collar crook named Jonathan Mardukas (Grodin), an accountant who upon learning that the corporation he worked for was an organized-crime front embezzled fifteen million dollars and gave almost all of it to charity. They travel across the country in a succession of vehicles, dodging federal agents, hit men, and a profoundly stupid rival bounty hunter (John Ashton). De Niro gets marvellous effects by seeming to be constantly suppressing anger and powerful physical energy. Grodin, a minimalist and a miniaturist, does all his acting with sneaky looks and minute variations in the tone of his flat, dull voice, and he creates a memorable comic character—a placid solid-citizen type who's much wilier and crazier than he appears to be. The two actors look as if they were genuinely enjoying each other. But as they get close to L.A. Brest starts pumping up his sweetly funny road movie with large-scale action scenes—it's as if he were afraid that a pair of superlative actors doing low-key character comedy wouldn't be enough entertainment for us. Also with Yaphet Kotto, Dennis Farina, Richard Foronjy, and Robert Miranda. Screenplay by George Gallo.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Manhattan Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, and National Twin. . . . ¶ 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia; through Sept. 8.)

Ministry of Fear (1944)—Very little of Graham Greene's mystery novel survives in this unmemorable picture, directed by Fritz Lang. As melodramas of the period go, however, this one is better made than most. Ray Milland has just been released from an insane asylum, where he was confined for murdering his wife, when he is drawn into a plot by a gang of German spies who are after defense plans. The heroine is the unimposing Marjorie Reynolds; the villain is that falsetto cutthroat Dan Duryea. (Thalia SoHo; Sept. 8.)

Los Olvidados (1950; "The Young and the Damned")—Set in Mexico, Luis Buñuel's ruthless—almost surgical—examination of how the poor prey on one another is the most horrifying of all films about juvenile crime. Buñuel doesn't treat his characters as ideas but as morally responsible human beings; there is little of the familiar American-movie cant that makes everyone responsible for

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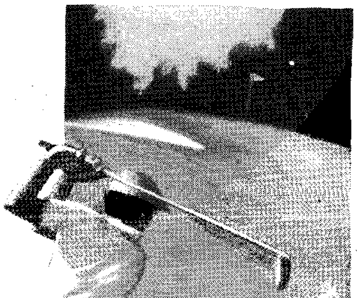

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juvenile crimes except the juveniles. There's no pathos in this film; it's a squalid tragedy that causes the viewer to feel a moral terror. Buñuel, whose early work fascinated Freud, creates scenes that shock one psychologically. Among them here is the celebrated dream sequence—perhaps the greatest of all movie dream sequences; it is disturbing long after the lacerations of the more realistic material have healed. The cast includes Estela Inda and Roberto Cobo. In Spanish. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 12.)

One-Eyed Jacks (1961)—Marlon Brando, the Great Unpredictable, is both star and director of this Western about a bandit whose only purpose in life is to kill his former partner. As the prospective victim, Karl Malden makes a tough antagonist. Katy Jurado and Pina Pellicer, a lovely young Mexican actress, give aid and comfort to the two enemies. Also with Slim Pickens, Timothy Carey, Ben Johnson, and Elisha Cook, Jr. The picture has some visual grandeur; it also has some bizarrely brutal scenes. It isn't clear why Brando made this peculiarly masochistic revenge fantasy, or whether he hoped for something quite different from what he finished with. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 11.)

Shadow of the Thin Man (1941)—Hardly even a shadow; Myrna Loy, William Powell, and Asta go through their paces for the fourth time, but the jauntiness is gone. This one is about a murder involving racetrack crooks, and the only thing that gives it any distinction is the cast: Stella Adler as a gambler's blond floozy, Barry Nelson as a muckraking reporter, Donna Reed, Sam Levene, and many others. W. S. Van Dyke directed. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Sept. 9-10.)

The Thin Blue Line—Errol Morris's trancelike, almost lyrical documentary tells the story of a 1976 cop-killing in Dallas and examines the process by which a man who is almost certainly innocent was convicted and sentenced to death for the crime. The movie doesn't have the structure either of "60 Minutes"-style investigative journalism or of detective fiction, though it borrows elements from both; its form is circular, spiralling, its obsessive, repetitive visual motifs echoed in Philip Glass's hauntingly monotonous score. There are interviews with the principals, closeups of key words and paragraphs from newspaper accounts, courtroom sketches, maps, family-album snapshots, diagrams, and a series of eerie reënactments of witnesses' different versions of the murder and the events that led up to it. This is documentary as epistemological thriller: Morris wants to bring us to the point at which our apprehension of the real world reaches the pitch of paranoia. In showing us the lies, the fears, the social pressures, the ulterior motives, the stubbornness, and the plain confusion that combined to produce the case against the unfortunate Randall Adams—whose fate is worthy of a Borges hero—Morris seems to be investigating not just this squalid murder but the very nature of untruth. His style is occasionally too fancy and elliptical for absolute clarity, but this is a powerful and thrillingly strange movie. Morris—who actually uncovered new evidence in the course of making the film—has turned Randall Adams' case into a kind of tabloid poetry, a meditation on uncertainty and the fascination of violence.—T.R. (9/5/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Tucker: The Man and His Dream—There are marvellous moments throughout Francis Ford Coppola's biography of Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges), a Midwestern inventor/entrepreneur who tried, and failed, to manufacture and market an innovative new automobile in the late forties. The style of "Tucker" is hyped-up forties Hollywood, and we believe, at first, that its intent is ironic, that Coppola is playing with America's optimistic, movie- and magazine-fuelled vision of itself in the postwar years. Bafflingly, this style doesn't change, or even modulate, when Tucker's bold enterprise starts to come apart, undermined by pressure from the government and the big three auto companies; the movie remains grandiose and artificial—all golden lighting and low, heroic angles. "Tucker" collapses in nostalgia, bad faith, and Capra-style populism. Also with Joan Allen, Martin Landau, Frederic Forrest, Mako, Lloyd Bridges (uncredited), and Dean Stockwell, who does a lovely, mysterious cameo as Howard Hughes. Screenplay by Arnold Schulman and David Seidler; cinematography by Vittorio Storaro.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Cinema II, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

Who Framed Roger Rabbit—This manic comedy, in which animated cartoon characters interact with live actors, is an amazing feat of entertainment engineering—like a Disneyland ride or a World's Fair movie. The setting is Los Angeles in 1947, and the screenplay, by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, takes off from the fairly witty conceit that the cartoon characters, called Toons here, are ordinary contract players in the already skewed universe of the Hollywood studio system. These strange creatures become involved in a conventional forties mystery plot, featuring a seedy, hard-drinking private eye (Bob Hoskins). The director, Robert Zemeckis, and his small army of animators and special-effects artists mean to pay homage to the Hollywood animation of the thirties and forties, but the movie doesn't have the right spirit. Technology and plot mechanics labor mightily to evoke an aura of freedom and uninhibited joy—yet there's hardly a spontaneous moment in the film. Also with Christopher Lloyd, Joanna Cassidy, and Stubby Kaye. The funniest Toon, Roger's sireny wife, Jessica, speaks with Kathleen Turner's (uncredited) voice and sings with Amy Irving's. The director of animation was Richard Williams. Adapted, very loosely, from the novel "Who Censored Roger Rabbit?," by Gary K. Wolf.—T.R. (7/11/88) (Gramercy, Columbia Cinema, and Embassy. . . . ¶ Coronet; through Sept. 8.)

Wings of Desire ("Der Himmel über Berlin")—The director, Wim Wenders, who wrote the script with the collaboration of Peter Handke, has a theme: in an approximation of Rilke's words, "Joy has gone astray." We're told that "when the child was a child" stories held together. Now all we have is fragmentation, entropy. Two angels—Damiel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander)—hover over the bleak, divided city and move among the forlorn Berliners, listening to what's in their minds: listening to the questions about existence that these people ask themselves. Our overhearing what the angels hear—the thoughts chanted on the track, all in even, quiet tones, as grayed out as the sunless skies—works on us like a tranquillizer. Eventually, Damiel falls in love with a beautiful French aerialist (Solveig Dommartin), and gives up his wings. With Peter Falk, who brings some funky warmth to the role of an American movie star, and Curt Bois as a sad-faced old man called Homer. The cinematography (tinted black-and-white, and color) is by Henri Alekan. This Franco-German production is in English, French, and German. (5/30/88) (Cinema Studio.)

A World Apart—Set in 1963, it's about a thirteen-year-old girl (Jodhi May) who lives a well-ordered, ruling-class life in a fine home in suburban Johannesburg until her father (Jeroen Krabbé), who's a Communist, flees the country in the middle of the night to escape arrest, and her mother (Barbara Hershey), the editor of a small anti-apartheid newspaper, is "detained" for ninety days, and then another ninety days. Based on a semi-autobiographical script by Shawn Slovo, the daughter of the journalist Ruth First and Joe Slovo, the leader of the banned South African Communist Party, the movie deals with the girl's feeling confused and resentful—the fight against apartheid is also her competitor. In prison or out, her mother is not all there for her. The theme of the movie is the conflict between fighting injustice and what we owe to our families—or, more poignantly, a young girl's pain at the loss of her mother and father, though she knows the reason for it. Shot in Zimbabwe, this remarkable first feature directed by the noted cinematographer Chris Menges has a visual snap to it. It's luminous yet very informal. And though, toward the end, it falls into chanting slogans, it has a radiant intelligence. The cast includes Linda Mvusi, who shared the best-actress award at Cannes with May and Hershey, and Tim Roth, Yvonne Bryceland, Albee Lesotho, David Suchet, and Nadine Chalmers. (6/13/88) (Quad Cinema.)

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THE NEW YORKER

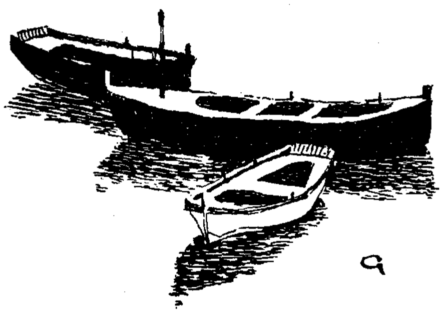
THE TALK OF THE TOWN

Notes and Comment

THE Pledge of Allegiance that Vice-President Bush has been reciting on the campaign trail as a device to advertise Governor Dukakis's veto of a bill requiring teachers to have their classes recite it is a recent arrival in the world's body of oaths. It was written in 1892 by an editor of the magazine *The Youth's Companion* for the anniversary of Columbus's arrival in America, and was made official only in 1942, the same year Mr. Bush joined the United States Naval Reserve. He took an oath when he enlisted and another when he became Vice-President, and if he should be elected President he will take still another, and if there were a law against political cynicism and he were brought to trial and chose to testify in his own defense he would take a fourth; and all these oaths predate the Pledge by a century or more.

Most Americans probably can't remember the exact words of the oath that Mr. Bush was required by law to take when he was sworn in as Vice-President, but we all know the Pledge by heart, ninety-nine per cent of us having recited it happily in grammar school even if there was no law making it a criminal offense for teachers to fail to have us do it. We stood by our desks first thing in the morning, smelling of soap and hair tonic, and recited it freely, with feeling, offering our loyalty to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one child, right hand over left breast, eyes on the flag over the blackboard. We said the Pledge with a clear sense, enormously thrilling and satisfying to a child, of lining up behind a great cause. But if our teacher, Miss Bush, had announced, in her shrill, fluty voice, "Boys and girls, state law requires every child to hereby recite, word for word, the Pledge of Allegiance, and any child who does not so recite, in a clear and audible voice, will be punished to the full extent of the law," we would have stood with a heavy heart, the *pleasure* of our patriotism snatched away by the fact of her compelling us to offer it.

Even in wartime, with its fevers of patriotism and fits of paranoia, Americans tend to believe that they should offer their loyalty freely, as Mr. Bush did in 1942 when he delayed college to volunteer for the war. Not even in wartime has our government organized the sorts of mass patriotic rallies that were familiar in the Third Reich and Stalinist Russia: the Leader on the high podium, the Masses below declaring their allegiance to the Fatherland and, by clear implication, their loyalty to The Great Himself, His Exalted Wiseness and Grand Shining Shafts of Brilliance, His Venerable Heart, His Sacred Socks. When it comes to loyalty tests, Americans tend to be decent and easygoing, as people ought to be who know something about marriage, and try not to pester each other with suspicions or bully each other into declarations of devotion. The country is too big for it, too lively, too beautiful. Patriotism is of the heart, a gift, and always has been, even back in the nervous days of 1969, as Senator Quayle's story of devoted self-interest in wartime so poignantly shows. The Pledge of Allegiance will ring out cheerfully in our classrooms this fall, law or no law, and the children of Republicans will recite it freely along with the children of Democrats. It never was an issue. Get off it, George.



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Signoff

WE found ourself in Atlanta the other day, in the office of Ted Turner. We'd heard a rumor that Mr. Turner had done the unthinkable again. This time, we'd heard, he had gone and made a videotaped message to be played on CNN—his Cable News Network—in the event of a nuclear attack on the United States. We wondered what was said on the tape. What did Mr. Turner think America wanted to hear as it prepared for incineration?

For the office of a media mogul, Mr. Turner's was modest in size, and it was tastefully decorated in muted shades of green and cream. There were shelves and shelves of memorabilia—awards, silver cups, photographs (the one of Mr. Turner and Fidel Castro, for instance)—and the whole place had a serenity that seemed to contradict Mr. Turner's dervish reputation. As we entered, Mr. Turner was standing behind his desk, in a corner of the room, and watching a bank of five silent television screens against the far wall, each screen showing a different news program. Mr. Turner, who wore a light-blue herringbone jacket and nearly matching trousers, greeted us with his famous smile and a hearty handshake. He checked his desk calendar for our name, and became momentarily confused, thinking we were from the Washington *Post*. After he'd discovered that his calendar was a day ahead of the actual world, he got down to business. "Now," he said, "what can I do for you?"

We asked him about the rumor. About the videotape.

"It's true," he said. "Would you like to see it?"

We said yes.

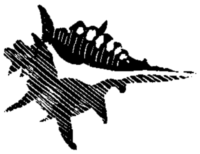
Mr. Turner shouted to his assistant, Dee Woods, who works in an outer office, "Can you get me that videotape? You know, the CNN one—the sign-off."

"I'll have to look," Mrs. Woods said from the other room. "It's in the files somewhere."

"Thank you," Mr. Turner said.

He offered us a Coke and a seat on a couch in front of a wall of Thermopane windows. Beyond was some spectacular hilly Georgia landscape. Mr. Turner gestured grandly, sweeping a hand across the view. "I love this view," he said. "I'm near all my friends." He pointed out the window. "I've got former President Carter a few miles away over there." He shifted his arm northward. "And I've got Gorbachev just a few miles farther away, over there."

Mr. Turner sat down in a leather armchair to the left of the couch. He picked up a kaleidoscope from a table between us and peered through it. "When I was younger, racing all over the world and having a ball, I didn't think about the world situation," he said. "I used to think everything was fine. So then, here I was in 1980, starting CNN—this global, twenty-four-hour-a-day news network—and I decided I needed to find out what was happening in the world. You know, what was *really* happening." He put the kaleidoscope down. "I started studying the world, and I got together with a group of experts and politicians who understand the planet better than I do. It's a crazy idea, I know, but I decided we had to take better care of our planet, because in taking care of our planet we might be able to save ourselves. At the rate we're going, man is the most endangered species on earth. If we don't become extinct by exhausting the planet's natural resources, then we'll destroy ourselves through nuclear war. And it doesn't have to be that way. The earth has about five billion years of life before the sun depletes itself. We can be around that long if we don't destroy ourselves through waste or war. Why rush it?"



We asked Mr. Turner what he was doing about the situation.

"In 1985, I started this group called the Better World Society," he said. "We're kind of like a mini United Nations. Lester R. Brown, a Better World Society board member, is the head of the Worldwatch Institute, in Washington, and his group puts out a book every year called 'State of the World,' which is an inventory of life on earth. You know, how the world's inhabitants are doing—man and the trees and the animals. And we use this information for good, common-sense global policy. That thinking extends to nuclear weapons, too. We need to totally disarm, because, just as with guns, if you've got nuclear weapons you're eventually going to use them."

Mrs. Woods came in with a videocassette and handed it to Mr. Turner. He slid the cassette into a built-in VCR. "Come here," he said.

We crossed the room and stood beside Mr. Turner as he turned on a large-screen projection TV. "Normally, when a television station begins and ends the broadcast day it signs on and off by playing the National Anthem," he said. "But with CNN—a twenty-four-hour-a-day channel—we would only sign off once, and I *knew* what that would mean. So we got the combined Armed Forces marching bands together—the Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force bands—and took them out to the old CNN headquarters, and we had them practice the National Anthem for a videotaping. Then, as things cranked up, I asked if they'd play 'Nearer, My God, to Thee' to put on videotape just in case the world ever came to an end. That would be the last thing CNN played before we—before we signed off. And, I'll tell you, those guys in the military bands knew what I was up to."

Mr. Turner punched the "Play" button on the VCR, and the image of a military band in front of a red brick building with white pillars came up on the screen. The tape's quality was fuzzy: it was hard to make out the faces of individual band members, or even see what instrument each was playing. But, on cue, all of them lifted their instruments, and the doleful, rolling strains of "Nearer, My God, to Thee" drifted from the television speakers.

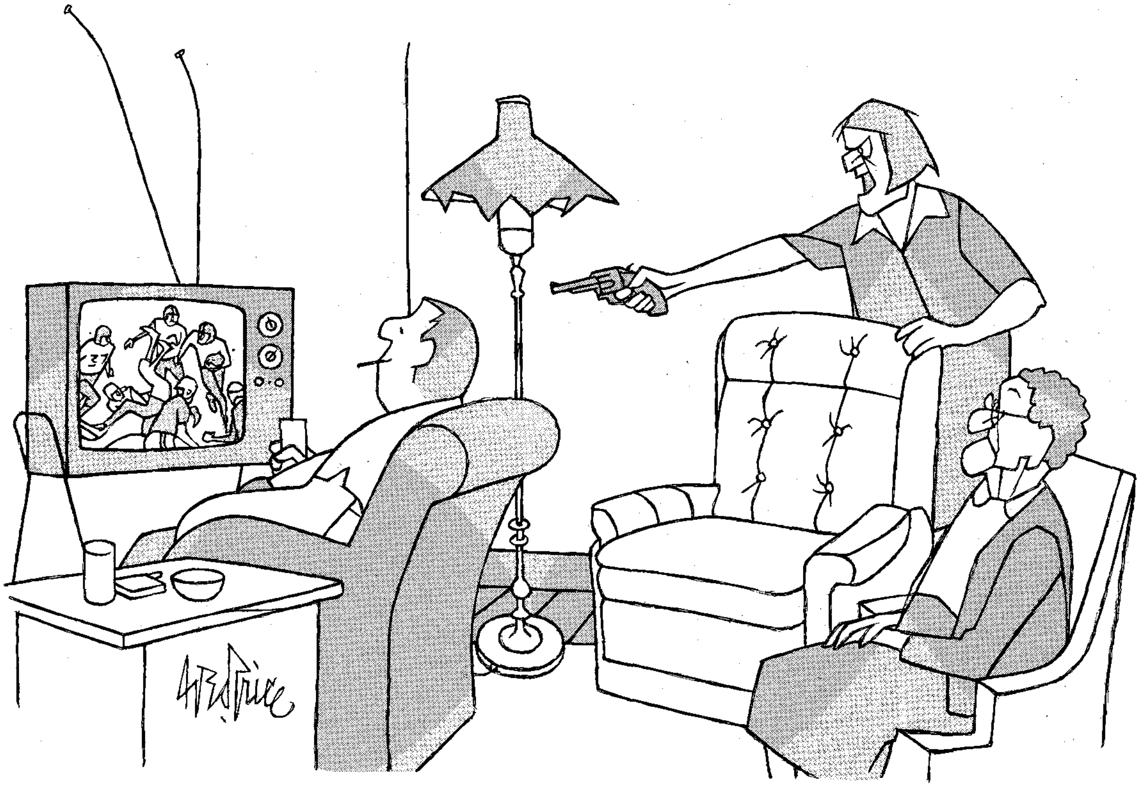
"I can't watch this without getting tears in my eyes," Mr. Turner said, and he left the room, tossing his hands in the air. We watched and listened as the band completed the hymn. When it was over, in about a minute, the band members snapped their instruments down to parade rest and the screen went dark.

Mr. Turner came back into the office. "Pretty strong, huh?" he said. "I keep this tape around because when the world ends it'll be over before we can say what we wanted to say. Before we can leave any final messages."

Casitas

Susan Slyomovics is an urban folklorist we know, and when she called to propose that we accompany her on a field trip to the South Bronx, one of the places where she's working on a study of *casitas*, we jumped at the chance. We knew from a recent art exhibit in SoHo that they're little houses built on vacant lots with found materials mostly by people from Puerto Rico, who use them as clubhouses and often keep gardens and livestock around them; one of the photo captions at the exhibit had mentioned a goat and some chickens wandering nearby, off camera. Susan had already been to Spanish Harlem, and had found ducks, chickens, and a caged peacock in *casita* lots. She had also seen a *casita* there made entirely of broomsticks, a *casita* with a Wild West theme, and some scarecrows, which she said rivalled "downtown art." In the South Bronx this is what we found:

First, we came to a skeletal *casita* that looked like a gazebo. It was a little more than a year old, was made of what turned out to be pretty standard South Bronx building materials—plywood and scrap lumber—and was painted sky blue and royal blue. A ladder led up to a tiny rooftop deck, and, down below, the *casita* contained an old refrigerator that could be used as an icebox, a charcoal cooker, and a few pieces of castoff furniture. A young man named Manuel Santiago, who came along while we were looking at it, said it was his (*casita* owners, we soon discovered, are seldom far from their *casitas*), and told us he had built it with his brother for their family and friends. A few feet from a makeshift baseball diamond nearby we spotted the beginnings of a garden—several young plants that looked like beans, growing under the top part of a hamster cage. Manuel said they were actually a spice for chicken.



"And here goes the gun signalling the start of the season."

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Next, on a bare lot, we saw a forbidding *casita*, locked and shuttered. It was covered with tarpaper shingles, though, and was also painted sky blue, with white trim. A guy sporting a fair collection of jailhouse tattoos showed us around the outside. When Susan asked what was inside, he said "Nothing," a little too quickly. As we moved on, Susan explained to us that many of the *casitas* she'd seen so far had been built to conform to the regulations of Operation Green-Thumb, a city agency that encourages community gardening. In theory, GreenThumb does not allow fully enclosed *casitas* to be built on garden sites, but in practice almost anything goes.

Next, we saw another small *casita* painted sky blue and royal blue, and this one came with a boatyard attached; two powerboats, a sixteen- and a twenty-footer, together with a bright-red late-model sports car, were taking up most of its vacant lot. When Susan asked the *casita's* owner why he had painted it blue, he shrugged and said, "Someone gave us blue paint." Six or seven friends and neighbors of his were there, putting together a welcoming party for a couple returning from their honeymoon, and one of the neighbors pointed out the owner of a bungalow-like *casita* in a nearby lot, who was standing shyly outside its fence. He turned out to be a taciturn Second World War veteran who was running a one-man *casita* operation. When we went back to the bungalow with him, he wouldn't let us in—"I have a big dog with nine puppies in there," he said—but he did tell us what he was growing: okra, tomatoes, cabbage, squash, peppers, cucumbers, and eggplant. There was an antenna on his roof, and we asked if he had a TV. He said, "Yes, a portable," so we asked if the antenna worked, and he shook his head solemnly and said, "No, that's for fun."

Next, across the street from a playground and not far from some towering housing projects, we saw a *casita* with a sign identifying it as Rincón Criollo (Creole Corner). It was big by *casita* standards—a good fifteen by twenty feet—and looked like a miniature hacienda. It was painted gray with white trim, and in its front yard was a concrete relief map of Puerto Rico, set off with a border of flowers and a white picket fence. Out back were a separate little house for cooking and a bare yard with a hammock strung between two ailanthus trees, where seven or eight barefoot children were playing. In a garden next to the yard were a peach tree, an apple tree, and a strawberry bed, which contained some decoy plastic strawberries—"for people who think they're going to take the biggest ones," according to Pedro Figueroa, who showed us around. Rincón Criollo's members specialize in making and playing musical instruments. A couple of pieces of goatskin, which Pedro said would be used for drumheads, were being stretched on boards. Rincón Criollo had had a live goat several years ago, but the A.S.P.C.A. took it away from them, because keeping it there was illegal.

Finally, we saw a *casita* we would like to own, tucked away on a street corner behind a row of ailanthus trees, on the edge of a lot so huge and overgrown that it looked like a meadow. This *casita* had been left unpainted; its owner, a wiry middle-aged man, told us he built it in five days six years ago, for his family. It was electrified, and had a front room containing two comfy sofas and wall-to-wall carpeting, a tiny bedroom, a kitchen with a working refrigerator and a kerosene stove, a porch big enough to sleep on, and a complicated plumbing system for flushing the toilet in an outhouse in the back yard. A fenced-in yard was small—there were just a few flowers out front—but in it were a couple of chickens and a German shepherd; indoors, in the front room, was a half-Chihuahua, half-Pekingese puppy named Rambo, who chewed gently on our shoes when we sat down on the sofa. Looking out from the porch, we could just barely see a busy city intersection through the trees. It didn't look real, though—it was more like a drive-in movie scene glimpsed from a back-country road.

Pageant

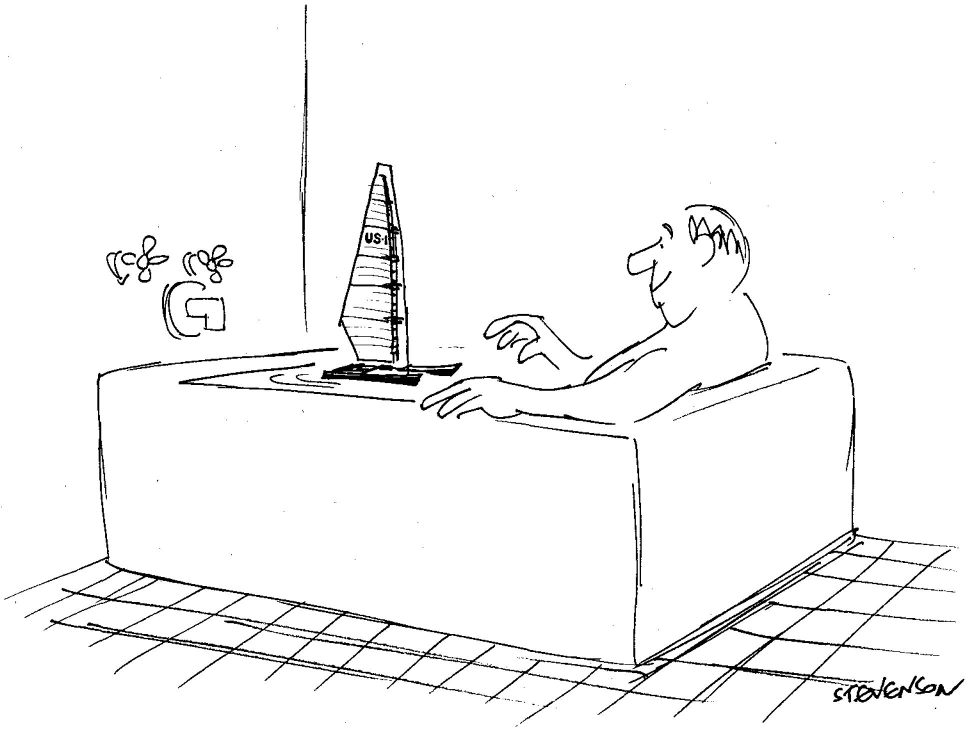
Christopher Hunte stood in a corner of his sweltering studio surrounded by bolts of fabric, pounds of bugle beads, stacks of *Vogue Italia*, four sewing machines, one perspiring assistant (female), one implacable chaperon (female), one very proud mom (not his), and the reigning Misses Staten Island and Capitol District (New York State). All eyes were on Christopher Hunte, but Christopher Hunte was serene. "This is the magic fabric," he announced, unpinning a gorgeous length of antique silk lace—midnight blue picked out with iridescent black sequins. "Under the pageant's lights, this fabric just comes to life." Five damp female heads nodded delightedly.

If the pageant were the Miss America Pageant and the sash read "Miss New York State," then the gown beneath the sash would likely have been created by Christopher Hunte; he was anointed Miss New York State's exclusive evening-gown outfitter by Miss New York State Scholarship Pageant, Inc., in 1986. We had been told this by a friend who'd had Christopher Hunte design her wedding dress.

We wanted to meet Christopher Hunte, and we tracked him down to a sixteenth-floor studio high above West Thirty-eighth Street on a blistering-hot morning a couple of months ago, while he was entertaining, with his assistant, the aforementioned four pageant-conscious ladies. The studio was cramped and airless, with jade-green carpeting and walls of a hopeful hot pink. The coolest-looking object in the place was a finished gown of gray silk hanging on a rolling rack near the entrance. Christopher Hunte himself turned out to be a tall, slender black man, thirty-odd, with sparkling eyes, long, elegant fingers, and a lilting island accent.

"I *was* born in Barbados," Mr. Hunte conceded when we asked, "but I was *raised* in Brooklyn. I came here when I was fifteen. I attended Grover Cleveland High School, and LaGuardia Community College, and I received my B.F.A. from Pratt. I started my own business in 1982, after eight years in retailing at Saks Fifth Avenue." As he recited all this, he was ironing a length of black silk charmeuse—a piece of material that would soon become the shell beneath the "magic fabric" of a gown for Miss Capitol District. "My first beauty contestant was Miss Jamaica/U.S.A.—she was a former model of mine—and in 1984 I began designing for Miss New York State contestants."

Christopher (by now we were calling him Christopher) introduced us to Miss Staten Island—Anna Marie Truncali, a surprisingly petite young woman, hardly sixty inches tall in heels, but those modest inches culminating in a big, dazzling smile.



"This will be the most elaborate gown I've ever worn," Anna Marie told us as she stood motionless before the studio's one mirror while Christopher sculpted fabric at her waist. "I'm absolutely thrilled. No, I have no preconceptions about how the gown should look. I trust Christopher completely."

"What I try to do is get inside the judges' heads," Christopher explained as Anna Marie pirouetted slowly for him. "Give them something that will make a strong impact—something sexy but not too revealing, sophisticated but not overdone, something very, very feminine, with lots of shimmer."

"Christopher, I don't know about this," Anna Marie said apologetically. "The neckline is so low!"

"That's just the shell, dear." Christopher laid a reassuring hand on Miss Staten Island's bare shoulder. "We stitch the dress on you in reverse, you see. Scallops of fabric will cover everything. Don't worry."

Miss Capitol District, from Schenectady, was Melissa Morrison, a lovely honey blonde. (Capitol District, Christopher explained, is the pageant territory encompassing metropolitan Albany.) Melissa, at the moment we met her, was jabbing at her stiff foundation garment with a fist. "I'm not used to wearing these contraptions," she whispered to her mother, who was sitting very close by. "You really used to wear one of these?"

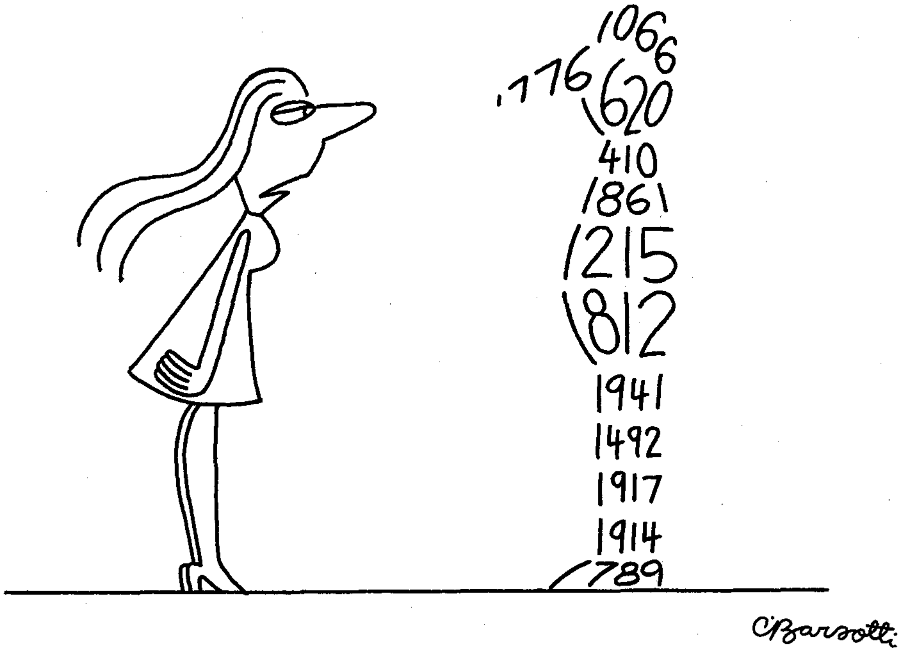
"I don't design for all the contestants who reach the Miss New York State pageant," Christopher informed us at one point. He was pinning together an open seam along Miss Capitol District's thigh. "In fact, a lot of the Miss New York State contestants use store-bought gowns. But each year a few hire me to design something special for them. More of them each year."

"I'm paying for Melissa's gown," Melissa Morrison's mom admitted shyly. "Melissa deserves it. She's my best friend—never gave me a moment's trouble, this one. How do we afford it? I'm a beauty technician, I rent a booth at the mall a few hours each week, and her father's a fireman."

We asked a few of the obvious questions.

"Twenty-five," said Anna Marie.

"Nineteen," said Melissa.



"You're history, Leonard."

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"Music—singing and accordion playing," said Anna Marie.

"Interpretive dance," said Melissa.

"Dentistry," said Anna Marie. "I'm in the N.Y.U. College of Dentistry. When this is all over, I'll become a dentist."

"I don't really have any specific goals right now," said Melissa. "Right now, my only goal is to be Miss America."

"You should come to the pageant," Christopher told us later, as we prepared to leave his packed little hutch of a studio. "You should see how this all turns out."

We agreed with him, and that is how we came to be in the Dulles State Office Building in Watertown, New York, seventy-four miles north of Syracuse, on a recent hot Saturday, watching eighteen misses vie to become Miss New York State 1988. There was Anna Marie, her smile still dazzling. There was Melissa, looking very nervous. The transformation wrought in this appealing nineteen-year-old by formal wear, high heels, cosmetics, and hairspray was astonishing. Melissa looked a very beautiful thirty-five. The gowns that Anna Marie and Melissa were wearing for the evening's curtain-raiser were not Christopher's creations. Christopher's gowns would not appear until much later.

"And now our semifinalists." Randy Wenner, the master of ceremonies, was all aglow. "Miss Greater Saratoga County, Miss Niagara County, Miss Dutchess County, Miss Long Island, Miss Westchester, Miss Southern Erie County, Miss Greater Syracuse, Miss Buffalo, Miss Fulton County, Miss Manhattan."

No Anna Marie! No Melissa! The smiles on their spotlit faces, however, were unimpeachable. Everything, expressively speaking, was still in place.

The balance of the pageant passed in a blur of swimsuits and stiletto heels endlessly promenading. The only constant was Randy Wenner. Randy Wenner on talent: "Miss Long Island will be singing for us tonight 'Musetta's Waltz,' by Giacomo Puccini, one of the most popular of all operatic arias, and one that has also been arranged in the past for artists like Jerry Vale and Vic Damone." Randy Wenner on programming aesthetics: "If you glance at your program, ladies and gentlemen, you'll notice that we have no intermission for you this evening, but we do have the next-best thing—a commercial break. Our sponsors this evening, and it's a beautiful, long list, are . . ."

Christopher's evening gowns made their appearance during the pageant program's final production number—a procession of all the Miss New York State contestants. The gowns were indeed smashing: smart, sexy, eye-catching, and very, very flattering. The winner of the Miss New York State 1988 title, in the meanwhile, had turned out to be Miss Manhattan—Mia Seminoff, a student at the Juilliard School of Music and a native of Oklahoma.

Afterward, at the Queen's Reception, we found Christopher already huddled with pageant officials, plotting this new Miss New York's projected wardrobe. What we wanted, though, was a final word with Anna Marie and Melissa. The crowd was thick and clamorous, but we located Miss Staten Island at last, in the celebratory embrace of her highly demonstrative family. She smiled and waved. And then, suddenly, Melissa Morrison was at our side. "I'm so happy," she said, her eyes a little glassy, her face quite flushed. "I'm so very happy."

We shook her hand. "Christopher's gown looked beautiful on you," we said. "Really wonderful."

"I'm so very happy," Miss Capitol District said again, extracting her hand from ours. "This is the happiest day of my life."

Reunion

A FRIEND writes:

Each time I go back to Cut Bank, which isn't often, I have the sense of climbing onto a wind-smacked platform with a very long view. My home town is small and lean, and sits on the western Great Plains, in Montana, about an hour south of Canada. Its elevation and its population count are roughly equal (about 3,750), and it is, with leaden regularity, the coldest spot in the nation.

Shelby, twenty-three miles east of Cut Bank, was the scene of the 1923 Dempsey-Gibbons World Championship boxing match, a bizarre and ill-fated promotion that put it briefly in the national spotlight. But Cut Bank can't claim much non-weather notoriety, with the possible exception of an episode that began in the summer of 1965, when a national advertisement suggested that a particular after-shave could make a man frisky enough to pursue only the best: "Maybe [he] takes the plunge and buys a racing sloop. Or tells the boss he won't move to Cut Bank, Montana." The city fathers feigned umbrage, letters flew back and forth, after-shave profits were donated to the hospital, and the whole

MEN WORKING THINGS OUT
Leo Cullum

affair came to a conclusion on January 27, 1966, when the company sent a small airplane over the town and sprayed us all, free, with something called Sportsman Cologne.

Forty-two of us gathered recently for the Class of 1968 high-school reunion, inside a yellow metal-sided building on the north edge of Cut Bank—a former machine shop, I believe—and became reacquainted around a water trough filled with ice and a keg of beer. Outside, the evening was warm and violet-tinged and smelled like wheat, but people in Cut Bank are conditioned to stay inside unless it's necessary not to, and that's what we did.

When I'm away from Cut Bank, it's easy for me to think of myself as a seasoned but decidedly youthful woman (on a good day, my interior age is about twenty-seven), partly because most of my friends have no children or very young ones, so there isn't the contradiction of a subsequent generation. But I discovered that a half-dozen members of the Class of '68 have children who are legally adults, and this threw me a little. One young-looking classmate is already a mother-in-law. She could be a grandmother in less than a year.

While I was mulling this over and helping myself to another beer, my senior-year boyfriend was trying to solve a mystery that is now a quarter century old. "When I was twelve, I got my first phone call from a girl," he told a pretty woman in my class named Jamie. "She didn't say who she was. She just asked me a question." He paused. "All she said was this: 'Do you like Elvis?' I knew that the right answer was crucial, but I didn't know what it was. Maybe she hated Elvis. But I took the chance. 'Yes,' I said. 'I like Elvis! I like him a lot!' And she hung up." He peered at Jamie. "I always thought that phone call was from you. Was it?"

"Nope," she said.

Then somebody put "Woolly Bully," by Sam the Sham and the Pharaohs, on the cassette player, and a few of us started to dance instead of talk.

Walking down Main Street the next day with Jamie and another classmate, Judi, I began to say something about a willow tree my parents had planted near a grave. The woman ahead of us on the sidewalk (she looked familiar but I couldn't place her) turned around and gave a friendly little speech on the kinds of worms that can invade willow trees. She held her index fingers apart to show how long the worms could get. That sort of thing happens all the time in Cut Bank, I remembered. Nobody assumes that any introduction is needed.

We kept walking and kept coming across people we knew, and we learned some details about three people with fatal illnesses, a person who had reportedly attacked his father with a baseball bat, and a person who, word had it, had become involved in an out-of-state funeral-parlor scam of major proportions.

Cut Bank has an easy familiarity with violence—especially the natural varieties. My great-uncle, who started Cut Bank's first newspaper, in 1909, referred in his memoirs to "the accursed trinity: winds, weeds, and worms." And the wind, although it was mysteriously soft-pedalled the whole reunion weekend, can still be a real heller.

"It blew all my flowers down," said the wife of a Class of '68 member who now owns a bar in Cut Bank. "Then they told us we couldn't water, because it's so dry. So I just flat gave up. In a way, it's a relief."

We held our Class of '68 banquet, the next night, at the Winners Circle bar and restaurant (we had prime rib, medium rare), and the only speech was a prayer by one of our classmates (he raises bobcats for zoos) for three people who had died since our ten-year reunion (an accident, a suicide, cancer). That brought to six the number of deaths in our class of a hundred and thirteen. A couple of guys down the table from me made a cheerful bet about which of them would be next.

Then we went dancing at the Moose Lodge, and the band, from Shelby, called us "the old folks" and condescendingly played things like "The House of the Rising Sun" while we cheered them on and milled around the floor under a bunch of shaggy moose heads.

Before I left, I walked down to the edge of the Cut Bank River, a dun-colored stream moving very slowly this summer. The literal cut banks of the river—tall, grassless cliffs—have rocky faces and are carved with small coulees.

We spent hours by the river as kids, smoking pilfered cigarettes, burying things, developing secret codes. Almost always, we ran into a stinging nettle we called ten-minute itch, because its effect, though painful, was short. Sometimes we found a shallow cave in the rocks and huddled gratefully inside, out of the wind. That was what I seemed to remember as I walked along the cut bank again: the thrill of a new shelter; smoking; itching.

OLYMPIC COMBINED

"OH my, it's a beautiful morning, just perfect for these opening ceremonies. And, Keith, I believe that's the team from Andorra leading the way now. A very tiny country with a big athletic spirit."

"Actually, Jim, that's the band from Alcorn State. With the Games switching over to this new, totally open format, many people think the battle for musical supremacy will be one of the highlights of the entire schedule. Alcorn takes on Bon Jovi later today and has a good shot at the medal round if they get some winning momentum."

"Keith, here comes a real surprise. The Secretary-General's Trophy goes to Canada for this entry, entitled 'Drops That Spot.' It's a whimsical look at the acid-rain controversy, with more than thirty thousand red and white carnations used in constructing the long border on this massive three-dimensional map. The entire display is just over seventy-five feet long, and the Canadian team members are swimming in a miniature dead lake that was made from five hundred gallons of real meringue."

"Certainly a credit to our northern neighbors, Jim, and amid the competition there is also coöperation. Here's a combined entry from Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia called 'Who Needs Vowels?' The huge figures of well-known 'Sesame Street' characters Bert, Ernie, and Big Bird appear through the courtesy of the Children's Television Workshop, and they are shown playfully bashing the unwanted letters with huge lollipop sledgehammers."

"Keith, a lot of action is going on at the judging platform, so let's check with Dick and Peggy for the latest."

"Jim, Peggy and I have just been watching the Royal Lipizzan stallions give an awesome display of moonwalking to the accompaniment of Michael Jackson's hit tune 'Beat It.' The horses are each outfitted in jet-black polyester jumpsuits with matching wraparound sunglasses. Peggy, what d'you think?"

"Dick, I really believe this was a breakthrough for the stallions in terms of style, athleticism, and choreography. They were getting excellent height on the jumps and their gestures were wonderfully interpretive."

"Oh yes, the hoof movements, so subtle and yet definitive, and the silver hoof covers—absolutely stunning."

"Dick, here come the scores now, and they aren't very good, either. This is not going to make the riding school happy. A couple of five-twos, a five-one, even a four-nine, my goodness!"

"Well, that's the judge from the Dress Barn and she's been very hard on all the entries using synthetic fabrics, so we shouldn't be too surprised. I hear there's more excitement at the starting gate, so let's go back to Keith."

"Thanks, Dick, it's a historic moment here. The first-ever appearance by a team from Vatican City. Their entry is called 'Urbi et Orbi,' which we're told sort of means 'Here, There, and Everywhere,' and it features two dozen life-size replicas of famous Church personalities, including the Emperor Constantine, Thomas à Becket, Archbishop Fulton Sheen, and Charlton Heston. At the controls is Giovanni Cardinal De Cordova, who is the focus of some controversy. Jim, what about that?"

"Keith, it's the old bugaboo—experience. De Cordova hasn't had much international competition and some of the other athletes felt he shouldn't be allowed to drive because of that."

"Ah, and here's what the Games are all about, Jim—a team with just one member. I believe this is the Republic of Vanuatu, represented by Ilekai Kulindani, and he's carrying a handsome ceremonial shield from his homeland."

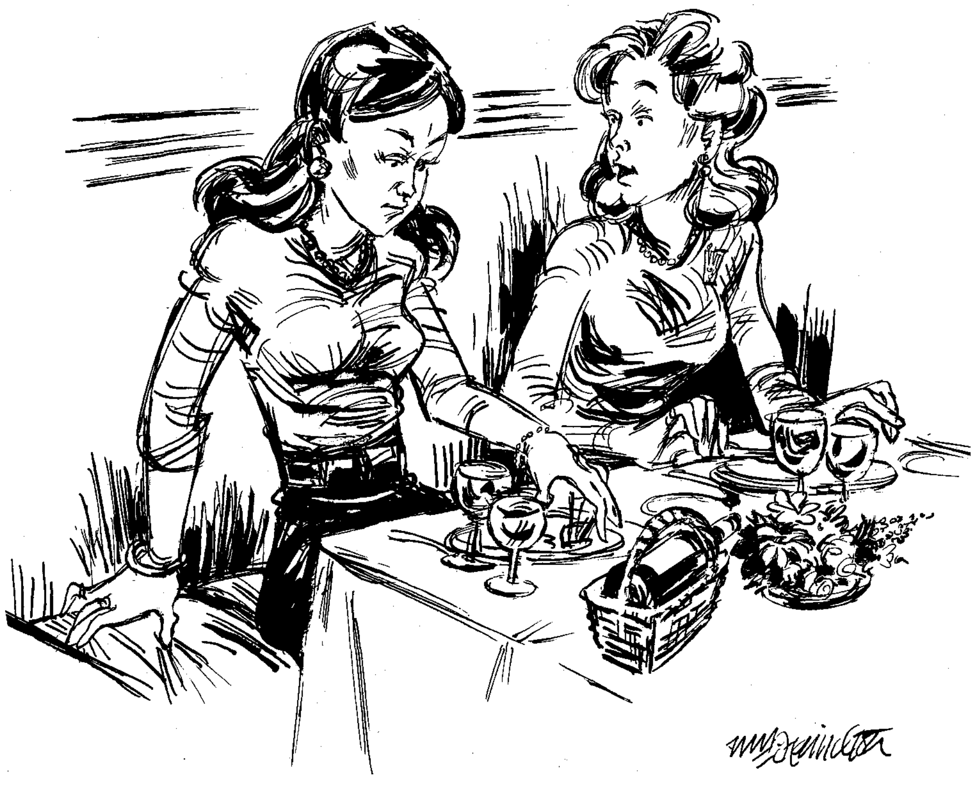
"No, Keith, that's Homer Formby. Furniture refinishing is one of the demonstration events this year, and Homer should take the gold easily. He's holding a beautifully handcrafted Colonial breakfast table that required only light sanding and a thin coat of oil stain to bring out the natural wood lustre."

"Oh, Jim, look at this! Vatican City is off the course! They're up on the sidewalk, didn't even make the first turn, and that means immediate disqualification! What a blow this will be for their whole program!"

"Keith, we said it earlier: Cardinal De Cordova is not an experienced driver, he wasn't familiar with this route, he hit that turn much too fast, and now it looks like he's spinning himself into a rut down there. It's sad, really, given the Vatican's high hopes in this new missionary area."

"Jim, this is a good time to remind our viewers that towing services are provided by Mr. Alfredo in exchange for the following promotional announcement. We'll be right back."

—JEFFREY SHAFFER



"Artists are difficult, Hetty, and leveraged-buyout artists are no exception."

MOOSE

Tommy Rincinaldi shot Bruce Barmusch, the inspector at the landfill, on the Tuesday before Labor Day weekend. He was angry because Barmusch had caught him dumping out-of-town rubbish from his garbage truck. Rincinaldi was known to have a temper and was thought to be slightly crazy. The bullet grazed Barmusch's arm and he dove behind the pile of the offending trash and lay across a pillowlike plastic bag that oozed wet paper and blackened vegetables. After a minute he lifted his head. He was panting. Behind him, the slope of the landfill fell away steeply. Seagulls floated in the distance. The sky was white with sun and haze. A small river, heavily polluted and the color of khaki, curved past the end of the long, man-made barrow, and two garbage trucks trundled toward the gate. Thirty or forty yards in front of Barmusch, at the high point of the landfill, the trash compactor, a huge machine that resembled a dragon on rollers, moved back and forth, belching smoke each time it changed direction.

There were two other trucks and several cars at the dumping front. Perhaps ten people had seen the shooting. Barmusch noticed Donald Stowe running toward him. He had jumped down from the scraper—the Caterpillar machine that distributed soil over the garbage in finished cells of the landfill. He was a small, bowlegged man in his early sixties. It was risky to run here; a foot could sink suddenly; it was easy to break an ankle. When Stowe reached the end of the compacted area, he picked his way carefully, sometimes bogging down to his knees in the loose soil and trash. He was breathing hard when he bent over Barmusch, and Barmusch stared at the sunburned top of his head. Stowe had had a heart attack that spring and had returned to work in July.

“I'm sick of this crap!” Rincinaldi yelled. “I am sick of all this crap!”

Barmusch's legs jerked involuntarily, and he put his head in his arms for a moment. “Don't tell him nothing,” he told Stowe, looking up. “I want him to think I'm dead.”

“Rincinaldi, you're an idiot!” Stowe yelled over the garbage.

“I'm sick of this shit!”

“What's he doing now?” Barmusch asked.

“Sitting on his bumper.”

After a minute, they heard Rincinaldi's truck driving away.

The truck was found abandoned later that afternoon at Kentucky Fried Chicken; the manager had called the police to complain because it had been parked there for two hours and was discouraging customers. Rincinaldi turned himself in the following day. He was charged with assault with a deadly weapon, illegal dumping, carrying an unregistered firearm, and threatening. He was released on twenty thousand dollars' bail.

Barmusch's job was necessary because landfills in surrounding towns had been closed and the trash collected there had to be shipped to sites much farther off, at costs ranging from thirty-five to sixty dollars per ton—rates the garbagemen didn't like to pay. The price at the city landfill was eight dollars per ton. Barmusch dug around the edges of each load after it was dumped, looking for envelopes or boxes with addresses on them. There was a lot of cheating—this was the third time, for example, that he had caught Rincinaldi. Barmusch was known, variously, as Officer Obie (from Arlo Guthrie's “Alice's Restaurant” song), Sanford and Son, or Bruce the Moose, a nickname that dated from high school and was a reference to his size and to the pronunciation of his last name. He earned eight-fifty an hour. In February, he had been laid off from the Pratt & Whitney jet-engine-repair plant in Southington, where the pay was twelve-seventy. He was twenty-three and married, and he and his wife had a mortgage.

Barmusch's current ambition was to get a heavy-equipment operator's license. Stowe was thinking of retiring in December. If that happened, Bobby Stanczyk, who drove the compactor, would move over to the scraper, and Barmusch presumably would have a chance at running the compactor. That job paid thirteen-ten. Stanczyk had promised to give Barmusch lessons late in the afternoon, when the compactor, known informally as Orange Squash, or “the squasher,” crushed the last of the day's garbage.

The compactor was an Ingersoll-Rand LF-450. It weighed forty-five thousand pounds and had cost the city a hundred and sixty-two thousand dollars. Instead of wheels, it had four rollers that were four feet across and covered with spikes. The rollers were silver and rust-colored in spots, and the rest of the machine was a bright orange. The first time Barmusch saw the compactor, he thought it belonged on the cover of a record album by Iron Maiden or some other heavy-metal rock group.

When he drove it for the first time, he was surprised by the instability of the garbage beneath the machine. It had a swampy texture and extended

“Dear President Reagan: You know as well as I do . . .”

"Your Honor, I feel threatened by this gentleman's intensity."

• •

in all directions like a lake—a lake on the top of a hill. From up there the roofs of houses could be seen a half mile away. The trash looked different than it did down at the dumping front. There it appeared as separate mounds that were soon bulldozed into a wall five or six feet high. You saw only the edge of the garbage; you didn't realize how far back it extended.

"How do you know when enough's enough?" he bellowed. It was almost four on the Friday after Labor Day. The landfill had closed at three-thirty. It was necessary to yell in order to be heard over the engine. Usually the driver wore earmuffs.

"You sort of stop sinking after a while," Stanczyk said, from his perch behind the operator's seat. He was standing up, holding on to a bar across the roof. He was in his mid-twenties and wore a Red Sox baseball cap. "After you go over the same stuff five or six times, you can tell. Sometimes it takes nine or ten. We're still sinking."

Barmusch felt the squasher tip from side to side, like a boat. "Get the blade way up when you don't need it," Stanczyk said. "It's fragile and there's big lumps of junk out there you don't want to hit. Refrigerators and stuff. They get in there even though they aren't supposed to be in there."

Barmusch raised the bulldozerlike blade, but couldn't see how Stanczyk could distinguish what was all right from what wasn't all right. There was a lot of garbage to look at—often it billowed high in front of the cab and they seemed to be driving into the middle of it. Then the compactor would hit the slope and climb steeply, like a tank treading up a riverbank. Barmusch would find himself staring at sky.

"Tommy Rincinaldi came around again today," he told Stanczyk. "He tipped his trash, and while he was doing that he made a pistol with his hand and pointed it at me."

Barmusch had a bandage on his left forearm where Rincinaldi's bullet had hit him.

"He's going to jail," Stanczyk said. "Let's see him be a wise-ass there."

The right front roller hit something and the steering wheel wrenched hard to the left. Barmusch lost his grip, and the whole machine tilted. He jerked his foot from the pedal, stopping everything. The squasher had no foot brake or clutch. When the pedal was pushed in, the machine moved. A hand lever determined the direction: forward or reverse. Barmusch was half out of his seat, his shoulder against the left window of the cab. Stanczyk put one hand on his arm, steadying him. Barmusch nervously switched off the engine.

"It's like that," Stanczyk said, his voice unexpectedly loud without the engine roar. "If you hit something, it turns." He and Barmusch looked around for a moment. Beyond the window, on the left, was a pit some seven or eight feet deep; they were tilted toward it. In front of them soared a mound of trash, a gelatinous mix of colors with browns and whites predominating. It was very hot. Flies buzzed at the windshield.

"Set the controls for the heart of the universe," Stanczyk said. "Let's blast out of here."

WHEN he got home, Barmusch sank reverently into the bathtub. He took a bath every night, followed by a shower. After a day at the landfill, his skin was actually a different color. His wife, Donna, had put up green curtains and there was a skirt around the water tank of the toilet—decorations decided on before Barmusch's change in occupation. He was still working at the jet-engine-repair plant when they bought the house. It was a small, one-story box, about forty years old, on Evans Street.

Donna came home after a while and came in and sat on the counter by the bathroom sink while they talked about a cookout they had planned for Saturday afternoon.

"You going to wear your American Hero jeans?" she asked, smirking.

"Shut up," Barmusch said, splashing her.

"You don't look as dirty as usual today."

"Well, thank you. Thanks very much."

The jeans dated from last week. The morning after Rincinaldi had shot him, Barmusch had had his picture in the paper, and the day after that, at a City Council meeting, the mayor had given him a citation for distinguished municipal service. Then the Council had voted to raise the tipping fee at the landfill to twenty-five dollars per ton to discourage out-of-town refuse and to avoid, as one member put it, "further violence to our valued employees down there who have to cope with this very unique situation." The day after that, Channel 8 did a news spot on the landfill and the TV reporter asked Barmusch to display the bandage on his arm. That night, as a joke, Donna went out and bought him American Hero jeans. She said they were for a man to wear when his day's work was done and he'd put his life on the line defending the city's garbage.

Barmusch hadn't been happy about the publicity. It had been difficult. He didn't like being known as a garbage inspector, and the shooting had frightened him more than he had admitted to anybody. He had nightmares.

"Stowe's looking pretty good," he said, soaping his shoulders. "He might stay on another two years, till he's sixty-five."

"Did you ask him to come tomorrow?"

"I asked him. I don't have any idea if he'll come or not."

Donna said, "You should get off this bulldozer kick, Moose, and take more courses at Middlesex. You may never get to drive that thing."

Barmusch had taken introductory chemistry at Middlesex Community College the previous fall and had hated it. He had barely graduated from high school. His grades had never been very good, and his last year there he'd started hanging around with Rico Landona, a football teammate who lived in a housing project by the rail line between New Haven and Hartford. Landona would get up to a hundred and twenty on Interstate 91 at three in the morning, in cars he said deserved reaching what he called their "true potential." Barmusch never participated in the stealing of these automobiles, but he knew he was guilty in a sense by riding with Rico once he'd stolen them. Landona would see how fast a car could go, and then he would return it to the general area from which he'd taken it, claiming it was satisfied. Barmusch didn't get much sleep that winter and spring, and he flunked a current-events course and received his diploma only after he wrote an extra paper that raised the grade to a D.

Landona was in prison now. He never sent letters, but sometimes he called Barmusch up. Donna didn't like these phone calls. The last one was just before Christmas. "You're at Middlesex Community," Landona said. "I'm at Enfield State. I don't know about you, but we're studying license plates."

BARMUSCH sometimes chanted to himself, "Dozer . . . scraper . . . squasher." At some point before it got too cold, he wanted to drive each of them. Saleski handled the bulldozer; he was usually at the bottom working with the piles of scrap metal that would be shipped to Japan for recycling and

LONG WEEKEND AT YOUR HOUSE

Strands of wind move
through your house
like the finest blond hair,
like your hair.

The porch that needs painting
peels its white skin in the sun.
We eat breakfast out here, although
it is nearly fall, and too cold.

You've spent a score of summers
slipping out this screen door
which sighs *No* when opened,
Yes when closed—out to town

or the sea, alone.
The caretaker lives
in the potting shed,
a fair-skinned man with slender hands;

he parks his spindly bike
against the gate, paints,
fries his breakfast
in the kitchen's best iron skillet.

Together, we envy him.
From his garden we pilfer
the last tomatoes of August.
We bite into them like peaches.

But it's September, and you tell me
how few men you've loved.
Outside, you point at the scrubby pine,
the path to a cliff,

the fading rug of summertime.
All this you are heir to.
Of course I want to be you.
Inside, the brown spines of books

your parents must have read
in their stormiest season.
At night I sink into their bed
and sleep.

—DEBORAH GOTTLIEB GARRISON

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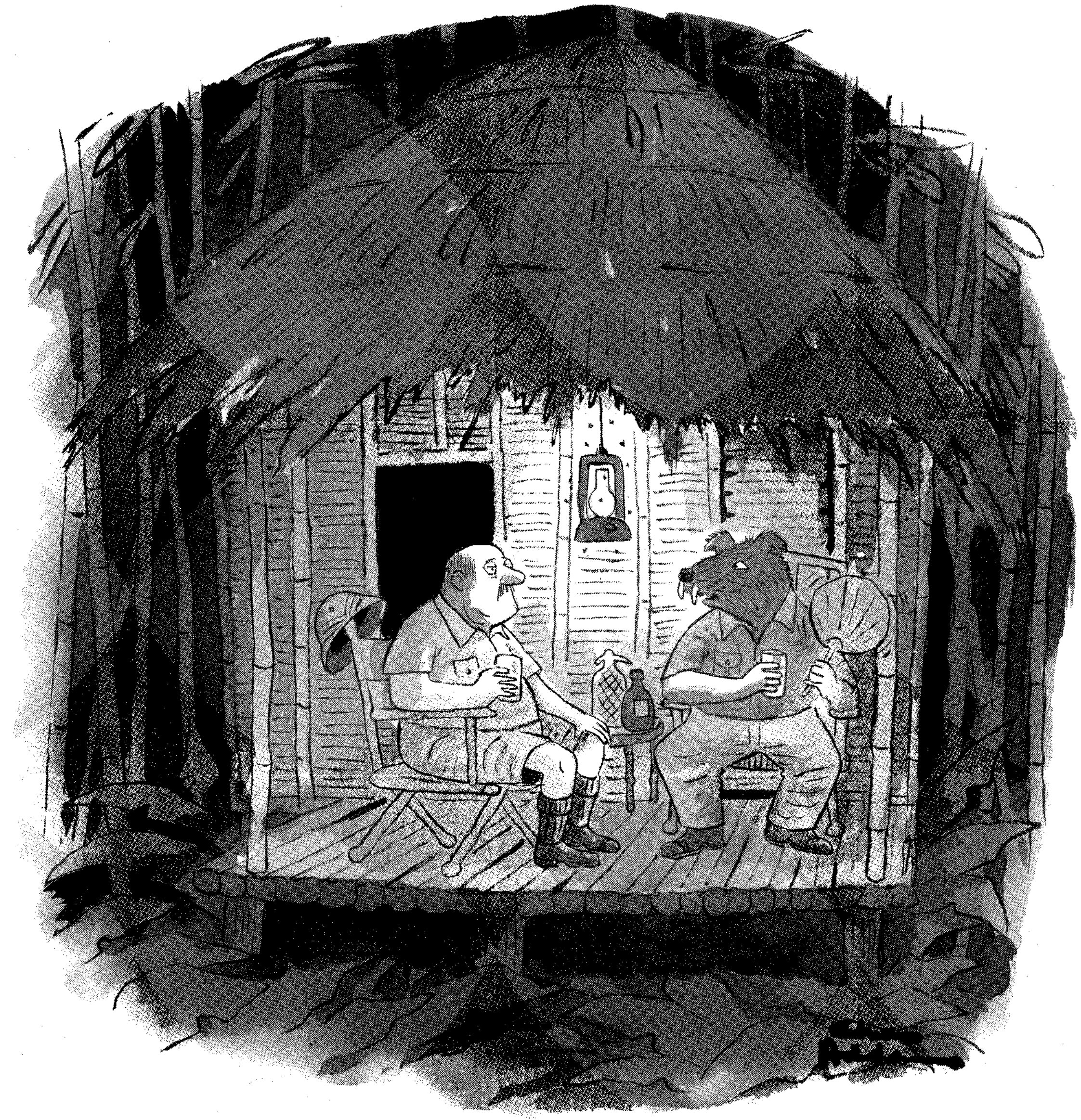
with the brush pile that eventually would be run through the Highway Department's woodchipper. He also pushed and carved at the landfill slope, using old construction material as a bed for the roads needed to open new fronts on the dumping site.

The landfill entrance was in front of the metal pile, near the truck scale and a mobile home that had a couple of old couches inside. Doris Masci, a heavy woman in her fifties, sat at the desk by the trailer's sliding window and read the scale and took the money from the drivers. The drivers had nicknamed her Tinker Bell. There was a bumper sticker popular in town that read "NO FAT CHICKS," and Sol Rincinaldi, Tommy Rincinaldi's brother, had one on the door of his truck. Sometimes he pretended to cover it with one hand as he drove past the window. Doris also had a walkie-talkie. By the time Barmusch had found an out-of-town garbage violation, the offender was often on his way down the hill; Barmusch would radio Doris and when the truck stopped to be reweighed on the way out she would close the gate. The driver had to hand over his landfill permit and reload the trash—a dirty, time-consuming job which usually required the offending company to send over an extra hand or two to help. On his way out, the driver would be given a bill for five hundred dollars. Truck owners usually appealed the fine, claiming a few envelopes with out-of-town addresses on them weren't enough to prove they were guilty. Frequently they got off—the city wouldn't press charges. Since the landfill fee had been raised, there had been less cheating. It was hot for September; the sun was relentless—nothing grew except some thin grass on the sections that had been soiled over for a year—and the wind whipped scraps of paper around. Overhead, the seagulls flapped and squawked. Visitors were oppressed by the smell of the landfill, but the employees were used to it.



"I learned one thing from the experience. Never call a witch doctor a clever illusionist."

• •

Sol Rincinaldi's truck arrived at the dumping front. It was lime-green and had a large daisy painted on the side. Below were the words "DAISY-FRESH CARTING." (Cute names were in vogue; also working in the city were Supertrash Inc. and Little Flower Refuse Removal Co.) The green on Sol's truck was blackened noticeably toward the back. His father owned the firm and there were eight trucks; they had routes in six towns in central Connecticut. Tommy Rincinaldi still came and went regularly while awaiting trial. He had shown no remorse over the shooting. He and Barmusch would trade angry, obscene gestures, and after each visit Barmusch would search Rincinaldi's trash scrupulously.

Shortly after Sol had tipped his garbage and driven away, Barmusch noticed, at the edge of the pile, a large glass jar that contained a human hand. He kicked at a box behind it and a torn seam widened. An eye stared back at him. He discovered an entire head in there, gray-blue in color, with the hair shaved off and intricate stitching down the cheeks. On one side the stitches curved up under the brow. Barmusch walked a short distance away and bent over. He realized after a minute that he wasn't going to be sick. It was a blue eye. He called Doris on the walkie-talkie and then waved his arms at Stanczyk. It took a minute before Stanczyk saw him and drove the trash compactor off the accumulated garbage and onto the clearing and stopped. The engine was idling gutturally.

"Can you repeat that?" Barmusch yelled over his walkie-talkie.

"He said that garbage is all local," Doris said over the radio. "He said you're crazy. He said you got some kind of vendetta."

"He didn't stop?"

"He said you can send the cops after him, he doesn't care."

When Stanczyk had looked in the box, he said, "That ain't supposed to be here."

Barmusch was trying to breathe deeply and to keep staring at the horizon.

"Like, a year ago?" Stanczyk said. "Before you were working here? I was running the squasher one day and I went over all these plastic bottles. They looked like big white milk jugs. And suddenly there were all these needles sticking up. You could've walked over them and completely skewered your feet. There were thousands of them, like grass. I can't believe what people bring here."

"We should call up the Highway Department," Barmusch said. "Tell Venturi. Somebody should get in trouble for this."

"Venturi won't do nothing," Stanczyk said. He had his earmuffs around his neck.

"We should get him over here to look at it, at least," Barmusch said. "He's never over here and he never gets the cops over here. It'd give me pleasure just to see him look at it."

After a while Stowe stopped the scraper and came over to find out what was going on. After Stanczyk told him, the two of them leaned against the compactor and lit cigarettes. When Stowe offered the pack to Barmusch, Barmusch backed off, clutching his stomach. "If I had one of those right now, you'd see something else that was ugly," he said. "I'd be imitating Mt. St. Helens, right here at the dump."

"Moose, you work here a few years and you'll be able to look at anything and not get upset," Stowe said.

"You thinking of retiring, Donald?" Barmusch asked irritably. "So I can drive the compactor and not get used for target practice or finding people's heads or any of this other crap?"

Stowe looked up, surprised. "I haven't thought about it for a couple of weeks," he said. "Don't get mad at me, Moose. It's not my fault."

"You should retire and take trips, Donald," Barmusch said. "Spend more time at Mr. Lazy's."

Mr. Lazy's had exotic dancers. Stowe was known to go there occasionally. He was divorced.

"Shut up, Moose," Stanczyk said. "Where're your manners?"

"I just want to know if he's retiring or not," Barmusch said.

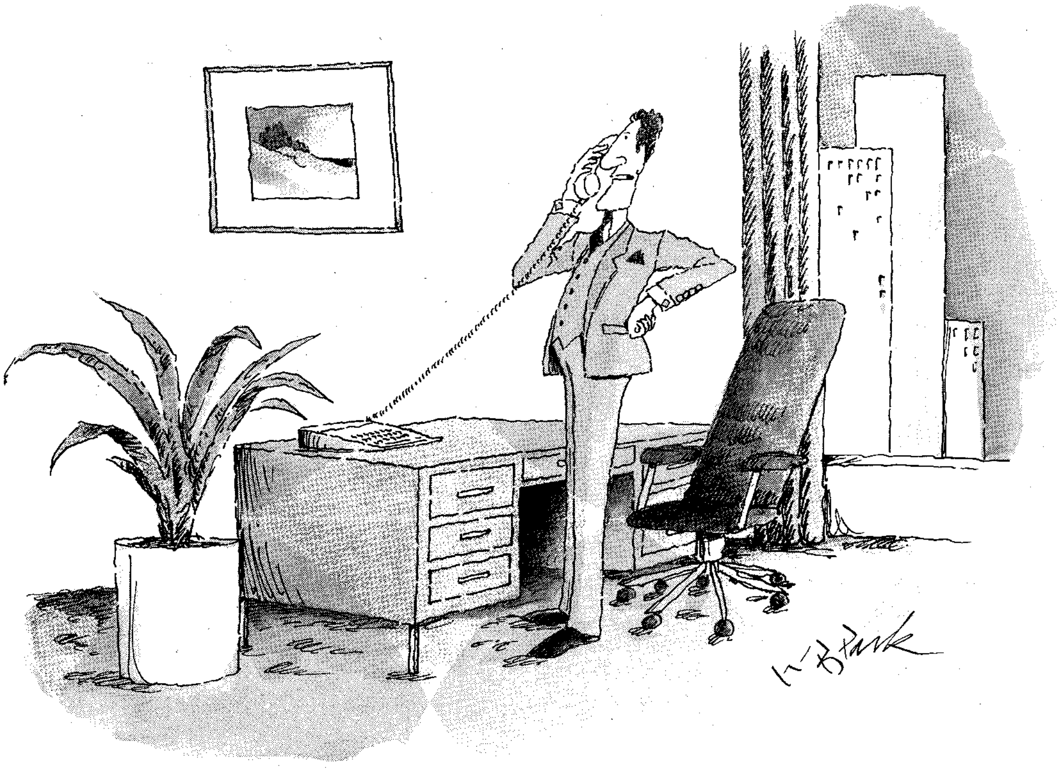
"Trips," Stowe said. "Right. I'm the kind of guy that takes trips. Who takes trips around here? Where've you ever taken a trip?"

"Bridgeport," Barmusch said.

"Cut it out," Stanczyk said, thumping Barmusch on the shoulder. "Tell him you're sorry."

Barmusch exhaled, shaking his head rapidly to clear it, and then took a deep breath. "Sorry, Donald," he said. That evening he called Stowe and apologized again.

THE cookout began at two. It was a bad time—it was very hot and the yard had little shade. Barmusch and Stanczyk had set up lawn chairs and two folding card tables next to the picnic table, and the stereo had been moved into the kitchen and the speakers placed against the screen windows facing the back yard. Friends Barmusch and Donna had gone to high school with and a few buddies from Barmusch's old softball team at Pratt &



"Hadley? I just found out that the era of the tall, self-assured, dominant male is over. Take charge, will you?"

MADISON AVE
MAPLE ST.
Steiner

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Whitney were invited, and Donna had asked people from her office, which was the local branch of Connecticut Light & Power Co. Several couples came with children, who tried for a while to play croquet. The men threw Frisbees and a softball, but ultimately the beer and heat left everyone sitting in the glare as if stunned. Donna had made a lot of potato salad, which was set out in large bowls, and Barmusch cooked hamburgers and hot dogs at the grill, which he'd started by blasting the charcoal with a blowtorch. As the afternoon passed, a sizable group ended up in the living room, which had air-conditioning.

About four-thirty, Barmusch was summoned to the phone. It was noisy in the kitchen, and he stepped onto the cellar stairs and closed the door against the phone cord. It was Sol Rincinaldi.

"We're busy," Barmusch said.

"Sorry," Rincinaldi said. "I figured we needed to talk."

"I knew you guys were into shooting people," Barmusch said, "but I didn't know you cut their heads off afterward."

"We got to stop this," Rincinaldi said. "I'm telling you the truth. I started that route yesterday in Cheshire. It was a mistake, but we're rearranging the routes and some of them are a little messed up right now. It was like four or five houses. I thought if I call up and level with you you'll be understanding and we can stop this feud that got started between you and my brother. It was only a few houses in Cheshire. Then Mrs. Masci tries to close the gate on me. I'm not ready to pay no five-hundred-dollar fine for a few houses."

"You should have been arrested."

"We can't check everything that goes into the truck," Sol said. "That's all I'm saying. I wouldn't've driven away if I knew that was the problem."

"You're a real noble guy, Sol," Barmusch said.

"I think the police are going to call you. They were trying to call people all morning. You guys should fine somebody over this. You should fine somebody besides working people who are trying to make a living."

Shortly after that, Venturi, the Highway Department supervisor, called. "You'll have to come over to the landfill for a few minutes," he said.

"I have guests."

"Well, there's a meeting set up. I can't change it now."

"Do I get paid for this?"

"Bruce," Venturi said. "You guys wanted me to do something, I'm doing something. Now get over here. It'll take about twenty minutes."

The road to the landfill went past heavy-equipment yards, a couple of antique stores, an American Legion post with a weedy baseball field, an abandoned silver-plating factory collapsing in a bed of sumac trees, and several junk yards. The landscape baked steamily in the heat, but the trees, grass, and sumac bushes softened the effect of the glinting metal. Then came the vast tan dust dune of the landfill. With nothing moving anywhere, no bustle out of the junk yards and no trucks climbing to the dumping site, it was revealed as a forlorn and godforsaken place, a place no one wanted to visit or even think about on a Saturday afternoon. The gate was open and Barmusch drove up the rutted, cratered road. The compactor was parked near the top and three cars nosed into its shadow. One was a police cruiser. After Barmusch parked, Venturi introduced him to a vice-president of the local hospital, a man named Kavanaugh. Kavanaugh wore a collared knit golf shirt.

"Where did you find it?" the policeman asked Barmusch.

Barmusch explained that the site was covered up, but pointed to the general location. Shadows from the seagulls circling overhead made moving patterns on the soil around their feet.

"You're sure it was Rincinaldi's truck?"

"Didn't he say so?"

"He didn't admit anything. He just said he picked up at the hospital."

"Yeah, it was his truck."

Venturi pointed at a plastic garbage sack held down with rocks by the right rear roller of the compactor. "Do you want to see it?" he asked Kavanaugh.

"Not especially," Kavanaugh said, but he went over and looked.

The policeman said to Barmusch, "Was that the only place you could put it?"

"What do you want me to do, take it home and stick it in the refrigerator?" Barmusch said. "Everybody seems to think we're responsible for this thing, but it's not even supposed to be here. Why don't you keep it at the police station if you're so worried about it?"

"Calm down, Moose," Venturi said.

Kavanaugh returned. "That's ours," he said tiredly. "Plastic surgeons do that sometimes. They practice on cadavers. They had a session Wednesday. Did you dig up any others?"

"No," Barmusch said.

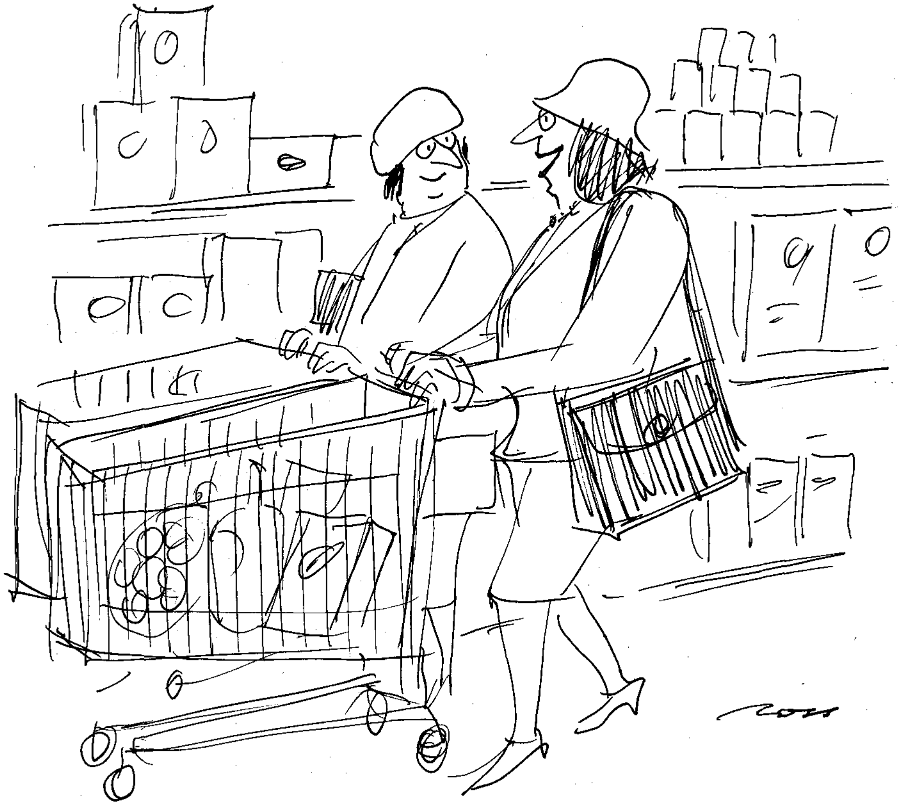
"Good," Kavanaugh said. He explained that the hospital incinerator was down. "The other thing, the hand, that's theirs, too. All that stuff's supposed to go to Hartford. Somebody got lazy. If I can figure out who it is, I'll fire him."

There was a collective shifting of feet. Kavanaugh looked at the plastic bag, then walked over and picked it up. He put it on the floor by the rear seat of his Chrysler LeBaron and drove off.

THERE were still a few people in the back yard when Barmusch got home. One of them was Stowe—he was sitting at the picnic table talking to Donna. He was a good thirty years older than anyone else who had come.

"This is the guy who called Tommy Rincinaldi an idiot," Barmusch said. "I'm lying face down in the garbage and Rincinaldi's holding a gun and Donald's standing there calling him an idiot."

Stowe took a gulp from his beer and told Donna he'd had his heart attack on a cold day when he was in the trailer with a cup of coffee. He'd been rushed to the hospital and the emergency-room physician had given him a new drug that dissolved blood clots. Later his cardiologist said it had saved his life. "After that, I'm not afraid of anything," he said.



"I just love Paul Newman, and I love his products."

"That's weird," Donna said. "Since he got shot, Moose is afraid of everything. He's been having nightmares."

"Donna," Barmusch said.

"Rincinaldi's crazy," Stowe said, "but he's only crazy up to a point."

"Point where he shot me," Barmusch said.

"Not for a five-hundred-dollar fine. He was trying to miss. He's just a bad shot. Fine him a thousand, he might've tried to kill you and missed. Instead he was trying to get close. That's when he's dangerous."

Barmusch thought about it and decided Stowe was right. It fit the spooky way Rincinaldi had looked. He had looked off to the side when he fired. There hadn't been any eye contact. The pistol, the hand, had seemed erratic and independent of the rest of him. Then the flame—there really was a small flame—and a tearing sensation in his arm. The arm had been flung backward. Hamburger across his forearm. It looked like a bad rope burn.

"You know what the sick thing about it is, I was almost hoping someone had been murdered," Barmusch told Donna as they were getting into bed that night. "Instead of this hospital stuff with the cadaver head. I was hoping for something exciting."

"What is it with you?" Donna said. "Why do you expect work to be exciting? That's why it's work. That's why they pay you. It's supposed to be boring. Why do you expect everything to be exciting around here? You're the same guy who's been having nightmares because things got exciting."

"I get mixed up," Barmusch said.

Donna turned over. Her back was to him.

"That was the thing with Rico Landona, right?" she said. "Excitement all the time?"

Once again Barmusch had trouble sleeping, and he found himself reverting to the bedtime thoughts he'd had as a child. He imagined ships throbbing through the night, freight trains rumbling invulnerably through blizzards, airplanes droning—huge machines like friendly beasts doing the work of the world, guided by responsible men who stayed up while everyone else slept.

—ALAN STERNBERG

A REPORTER AT LARGE

LARGE CARS—I

The Big Engines
In the Night—
The Diesel on the Pass . . .
—*Jack Kerouac,*
"*Mexico City Blues.*"

Courtesy Michael Gallacher

AMERICAN long-distance truck drivers like to tell a story that involves hauling lamb, pork, or sides of beef—a cargo known as swinging meat—into New York City. Swinging meat is hauled in refrigerated vans called reefers, and because it is a valuable load and composed of relatively portable parts it is considered attractive to thieves. To arrive at the meat-packing district in southwest Manhattan, a driver must pass through a particularly sinister intersection, the story goes. If the traffic signal is green, there's no problem. If it is red, however, the driver must ignore it and keep moving, at all costs. If he stops, bands of thieves will jump out from the roadside, armed with cans of Freon and heavy hammers. They will spray the Freon on the trailer's back-door locks, then smash the brittle, frozen metal. As the unwitting driver and his rig go one way, the swinging meat flies the other—off its hooks, out the open door, into waiting vehicles.

I have heard this story at truck stops as far apart as Post Falls, Idaho, and Angola, Indiana. I've heard it from truck drivers, former truck drivers, truck-stop attendants, even college students unloading trucks at grain elevators—students who have never been closer to New York City than Spokane. Its pervasiveness is very likely exceeded only by the story about a woman driver in a state of undress. Sometimes she will be naked. Sometimes she will be wearing only a blouse, or only a skirt. Sometimes she will be completely clothed but her skirt will be hiked well above her knees. Often she passes by in a hurry, allowing the driver, high up in his cab, only a glimpse, but occasionally she adjusts the speed of her car—she favors Camaros and Volkswagen bugs—so that she runs beside the truck for mile upon mile.

Last September, in the midst of southbound stop-and-go multi-lane chaos before a toll booth on Interstate 294 west of Chicago, I asked Lonnie Umphlett if he had ever heard the New York story. Lonnie was driving a tractor-trailer rig for Davis Transport, of Missoula, Montana. He was heading for Lodi, New Jersey, with a load of panelling from Oshkosh, Wisconsin, and, with the blessings of his bosses at Davis, had taken me on as a passenger; this was the first of two trips we would make together.

"Sure, I've heard it," he said, moving the truck forward in third-under, a creeper gear usually reserved for loading docks or truck-stop parking lots or for starting a loaded truck up an incline. "I suppose that once, maybe, something like that happened to a hand over in the Large City. But you hear a lot of stuff out here that you can't take for gospel. You know the difference between a fairy tale and a trucker's story, don't you? A fairy tale begins 'Once upon a time' and a trucker's story begins 'Now, this ain't *no* shit.' "

Every so often, when Lonnie has to pull off the highway at a weigh station, he reaches behind his seat, grabs a battered red baseball cap with a Harley-Davidson logo on it, and pulls it low over his head. Then he slumps down in the seat. Lonnie is on the small side—five feet ten inches and a hundred and fifty-five pounds—and he can more or less disappear in the shadows of the cab. He does this when he is skirting the federal weight limit of eighty thousand pounds, or hasn't updated his logbooks, and wants to avoid scrutiny. His theory is that he looks anonymous. His theory is wrong.

Lonnie has thick, wavy reddish-blond hair. Parted in the middle, it sweeps across his forehead toward his ears in two diagonals, and continues past his ears to his shoulders. He has a mustache and a full beard. If it is an especially bright day, "when sparklers from car windows and bumpers can pull the optic nerve right *out* of your skull," he wears very dark, black-rimmed sunglasses—"my Stevie Wonder shades." Most of the time, he wears undersized photosensitive wire-rims. He could be a biker, a member of a motorcycle gang—the one they call Professor. "People see me walking across the lot at a truck stop and they figure they've got a sure sale. But they're out of luck. I don't smoke pot or eat powders or potions. Matter of fact, I'm about the straightest guy you'll meet, despite my hair. And that isn't even my fault. I guess it's my dad's mom's. Her hair grows really fast, and so does mine. I can hardly keep up with it."

Lonnie is thirty-six. When he was a teen-ager growing up in Suffolk, Virginia, he and his pals took to building and riding bicycles with the frame turned upside down and the seat and handlebars extended upward, allowing the cyclist to pedal down the road six feet or so off the ground. "My bike was a de-luxe model," he says. "It had reflectors, a chain guard—the whole business. The problem was that handlebar extender. I was using broomsticks, and they kept breaking. I took some welding in school in order to learn how to make a better extender."

He got married at eighteen, and the marriage lasted three years, during which time he continued welding—first for a manufacturer of farm equipment, and later at a local paper mill. After his divorce, he began a tour of Southern ports, along the Gulf and Atlantic Coasts, working as a welder, with his all-important union card. He remembers those days as a time of "good money and little responsibility," but generally shrugs them off as long gone and just as well. "I'd get tired of a job and move on down the road," he says. "Go to a new environment, make a couple days of phone calls, and get some work. I always had dollars. Lived in an apartment with another bachelor, doing whatever bachelors with money do in wide-open port towns—get dressed up in a suit and take a date on my motorcycle and go eat Chateaubriand, or run up to Washington and spend the weekend at the Smithsonian, or get stopped by the police in New Orleans because they thought I was panhandling. Other things. The usual."

He turned to truck driving briefly, hauling containers of peanuts from warehouses to East Coast ports, and then decided he'd take his union card and go work on the Alaska pipeline. On the way north, he worked at the Hidden Valley Ranch near Boulder, Colorado, where his duties included grooming a buffalo named Ralphie, the mascot of the University of Colorado. He heard of work in western Montana and stopped off in Missoula in 1979, where he did some welding for a couple of years. He liked the good hunting and fishing there, but he never got used to working for five or six dollars an hour—the normal non-union welding wage in the depressed economy of western Montana—or to the periodic layoffs he encountered, and in 1981 he returned to driving trucks.

His first long-haul trip out of Montana was a load of lumber to Kansas City. "I got in the truck and went. That peanut driving was never long-distance, never where I didn't know where I was. This time, I was blind. I didn't know where the fuel stops or the inspection scales were, and, in addition, I had to sneak into K.C., because of the Mississippi Block. In those days, Illinois, Missouri, and Arkansas had seventy-three-thousand-pound limits, and I was rolling with about eighty. I kept to the back roads." Not far from

KIDNAPPED

1
Time's not on your side, the doctor says,
Nor the dead who'll rot on a silver plaque,
As you'll see again the men jostle the morning leaves,
And among the graves, in a far field,
The women, too, where the bones weep.

2
Is a chapel in the city opening its doors,
An old monk squatting in the histological dark,
Are the pills on the table, will they bring peace,
A white knife entering the cupboarded flesh
Now the carcass breathes? . . .

3
As we live we'll remember dying in dreams,
Remember the psalm and the grain and the wedding ring,
The believers in the blood and the firstborn,
Remember the thunder that lies awake in the sky,
Or screams in the pillow till we sleep.

4
At the hospital a nurse has struck another vein
And it's blown up to the size of an egg,
The doctor apportioning the hours to come:
Look, the boats, he says, afloat on a marble shore,
And here the zero chances of immortality . . .

5
Still, if time's not on your side,
Then beaded with stars every link of the journey
You'll meet a season you'll never get clear,
When the distances are drugged and the scars must deepen,
Though, perhaps, for once, no longer in pain.

6
We'll yield our names to a dull valley,
Our names hum and burn in the trauma,
The people asking: *why not do it, why delay,*
As fighting the self, the self's ogling a runaway
Child with a copy of "Kidnapped" in his backpack . . .

7
Where's he off to, that boy, so chaste in the evening,
What adventure is left, and who shall he be,
So driven by himself to forget himself,
The blast of a shotgun rifling the air
And a moon swimming out of a last vision?

—ROBERT MAZZOCCO

• •

"You've taught me how to think."

• •

Kansas City, going along the Missouri River, he met a tank truck coming toward him. "He must have been doing the same thing I was, only coming the other way. We met right at a narrow bridge. Lord have mercy! If we missed by more than two inches, we missed by a mile."

Since that first trip, Lonnie has alternated trucking with irregular periods of other work, mostly welding. From 1981 through 1987, he drove about three hundred thousand miles, most of them for Davis, though he spent a brief, financially and emotionally disastrous time as an owner-operator. He has never encountered gangs armed with Freon (or, as in another popular story, gangs that drop junk cars off overpasses in front of trucks in some sort of insurance scam), but he has had a few encounters with the untoward elements of highway society. The cab of his truck has been broken into three times—twice in Salt Lake City and once in Ontario, California—and last fall, at a truck stop in Virginia, he returned to find his trailer minus a five-hundred-and-seventy-dollar tire and wheel. Once, in Queens, he had a near-confrontation with a group of lowriders.

But these incidents are rare, and Lonnie worries more about other things: garden-variety road weariness (one of his favorite expressions as he's looking for a place to pull in for the night is "Like Mister Ed says, I better hit the hay before I eat it"); floods in Chicago; blizzards in Colorado; road-obliterating thunderstorms in western Kansas; bone-jarring stretches of interstate in Pennsylvania; coon-hunting headlights ("One beam is aimed for the trees, but it hits my mirrors on the way"); Denver ("Crowded interstates go right through town"); Kansas City ("Hills and crazy drivers—must be the water, which is about the worst in the world"); anyone from Wisconsin ("The worst class of drivers in America. Wisconsin, the Land of No Minds. They stick to me like glue"); skunks ("Squarsh one of *those* bad boys and you're gonna know about it for the next state or two"); and cities in general.

In 1980, Lonnie met Debbi Homan at a dinner party in Missoula. A year later, Debbi's husband died of Marfan syndrome, a congenital heart condition, which also afflicts Debbi's twelve-year-old son, John. A year after that, Lonnie and Debbi were married, and in 1983 they had a daughter, Jenna. The Umphletts live in a four-bedroom log house up three miles of dirt road in the foothills of the Bitterroot Mountains, near the Montana-Idaho border. The house sits on the northwest corner of five pine-scattered acres. In the grassy enclosed yard are a swing set, a tree house, an empty artificial pond, and a sandbox. Near the woodshed and carport are the family's vehicles—two International Scouts (a 1962 for parts and a 1963 pickup), a 1951 Chevy panel truck, a beige Volkswagen station wagon, and a 1979 Chevy LUV. (Lonnie's pride and joy, a 1964 blue-metal-flake Harley-Davidson motorcycle, is stored in the basement.) Inside the house, the living room is wide, bright, and airy, and textured with flowers and hanging plants. On one wall is a poster of Bob Dylan and a large Confederate flag. In a corner, a love seat sits in front of a television set. An RCA Victor radio dating from the forties, with a Bible lying on top of it, faces a stereo system on the opposite wall. The kitchen looks lived in, and is decorated with examples of stained-glass work by Debbi (night lights, window hangings). On the refrigerator door are a "Letter from Jesus," a sign reading "This Is No Ordinary Housewife You're Dealing With," and two cartoons—one a Gary Larson "Far Side" panel showing trench-coated bears on a busy city street, the other a postcard depicting a flatbed truck loaded with potatoes and rounding a corner, with its driver running down the street ahead of it. The caption reads "I'll Be Home Soon."

Debbi and Lonnie were both brought up in religious households. They began attending the Christian Life Center, an Assembly of God congregation, early in 1986, and in April of 1987, after a revival meeting, they, in their words, "rededicated their lives to Christ." Lonnie takes his beliefs seriously, as the incident with the lowriders in Queens may illustrate. Late one night, he was parked on a deserted street, waiting to unload in the morning, when a car pulled up ahead of him and a group of toughs emerged and began heading his way. They turned and piled back into the car at the last moment, to chase another group of belligerents, who had happened by and shouted at them. "I was scared," Lonnie recalls. "I used to carry a long Colt and a short twelve-gauge—a stagecoach shotgun—in the cab. In the old days, I'd probably have reached for one of them. But I'm a spiritual man now. My life is in worthier hands." Though an important aspect of Assembly of God belief is missionary work, he never tried to nudge his non-believing passenger toward the straight and narrow, preferring to let his life be seen as an example of his faith; after he had explained the difference between fairy tales and truckers' stories, he added, in his deep Virginia accent, "Pardon my language." But forbearance has its limits, and the single aspect of the job that pushes him to spitting anger is the one that largely defines it: being away from home.

On Halloween afternoon last year, Lonnie and I stopped for lunch at a small truck stop just outside Laramie, Wyoming, on a bright, breezy, mild High Plains autumn day. This was during our second trip together; we were loaded with grinding balls—steel spheres about half the size of bowling balls—which we were taking from Kansas City to a mine near Vernal, Utah, three hundred miles down the road, where they would be used to crush ore. Lonnie ordered a hamburger and called home—as he does three times a week when he's on a trip—from a tableside phone. To give him some privacy, I took my hamburger over to a pinball machine. Two dollars later, Lonnie, food in hand, walked up behind me and said gruffly, "Let's get out of here."

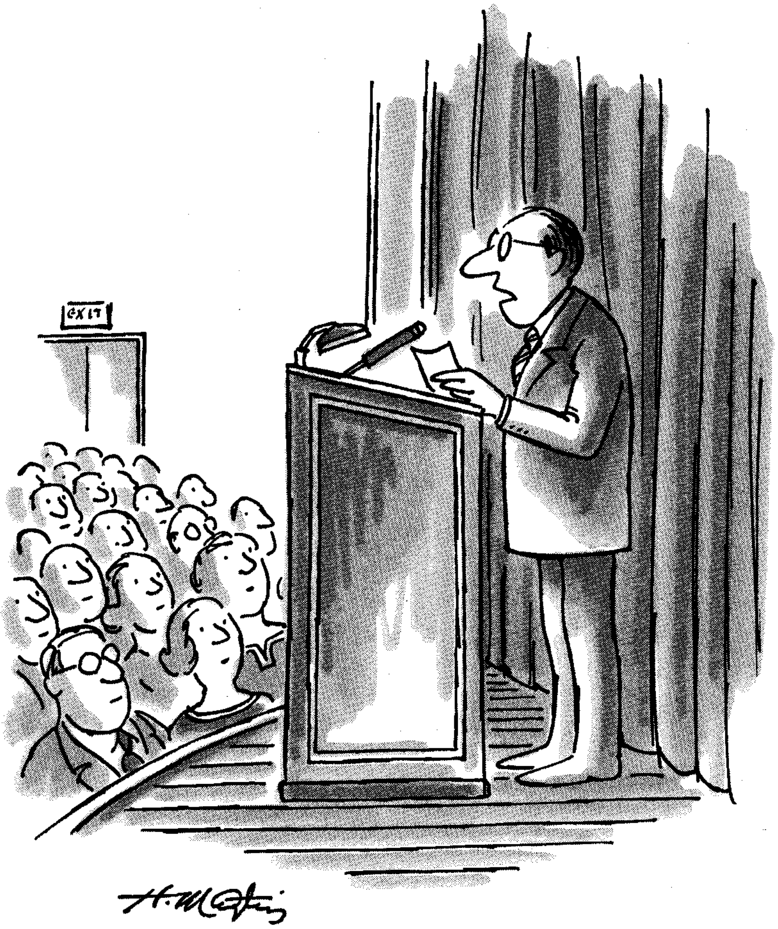
Twenty silent miles down the road, he told me that a large black bear had been prowling around his house and was becoming increasingly bold. It had come by the last two nights, tipping over trash barrels, Debbi had told him, and then, early that morning, it had rumbled right up onto the porch, with Haus (pronounced Hoss), the Umphletts' hundred-and-fifty-pound dog—half English setter, half St. Bernard—barking wildly on its heels. The children were frightened out of their wits. Debbi knew how to use the rifle Lonnie keeps around the house, but she was very reluctant to do so, for fear of hitting someone who might be walking around in the woods.

"I'm gonna blow that son-of-a-bitch bear up," Lonnie said. He leaned over the steering wheel, as if to put himself a few inches closer to home. "Haus is so nervous and tired from barking and running around all night trying to defend the family that Deb says he isn't even eating. He just comes back in the morning from patrol and goes down to his bed in the basement and lies there. Poor Haus—it's triple duty for him today. Debbi's having a Halloween party this afternoon, and there's trick-or-treating tonight. Jenna is Little Bo-Peep, and Debbi made Haus a bow, so he can walk around like her sheep. Plus it's his birthday, and Deb is going to make a cake for him in the shape of a bone. The kids would have a fit if he didn't get his cake, with candles and everything. Then, after the two parties and the trick-or-treating, he's gotta come on home and be a guard dog all night. Lord!"

Lonnie finished the hamburger and angrily threw the wrappings on the floor beside his seat. I scrunched toward the window and became fascinated by the countryside.

Another twenty miles west, he apologized for his outburst. "I tend to overreact," he said. "Really, what's my big problem? I mean, all I got is a six-hundred-pound wild and hungry animal terrorizing a woman and two kids who live three miles from the highway. The nearest neighbors are a half mile away. And where am I—papa and husband? Oh, I'm running around the countryside eight hundred miles from home carrying a bunch of damn grinding balls to someone's damn phosphate mine in Mormonburg, damn Utah."

Late that night, Lonnie called home again. The party had been a success. Jenna was the prettiest Bo-Peep anyone had ever seen, and Haus the most animated sheep anyone had ever seen. The bear, its pre-hibernation frenzy evidently waning, had not returned. And Lonnie had hatched a plan of action: the next morning, after church, Debbi would buy an air-horn-in-a-can, to frighten the



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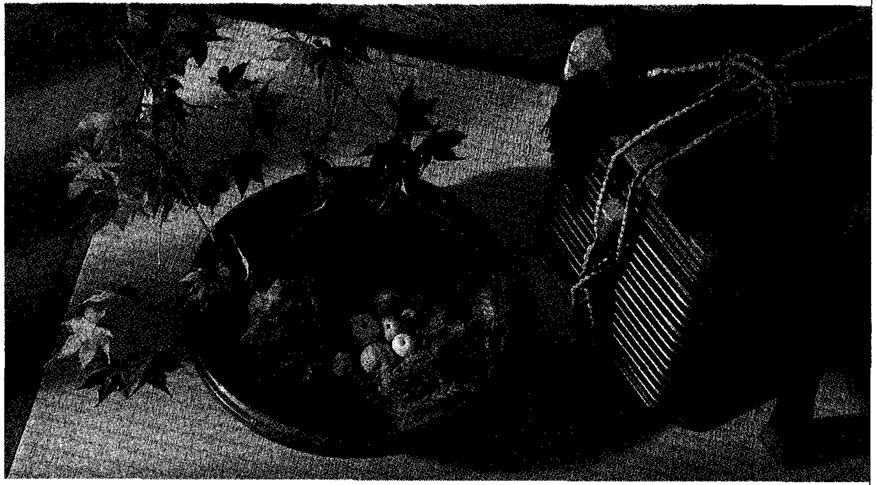

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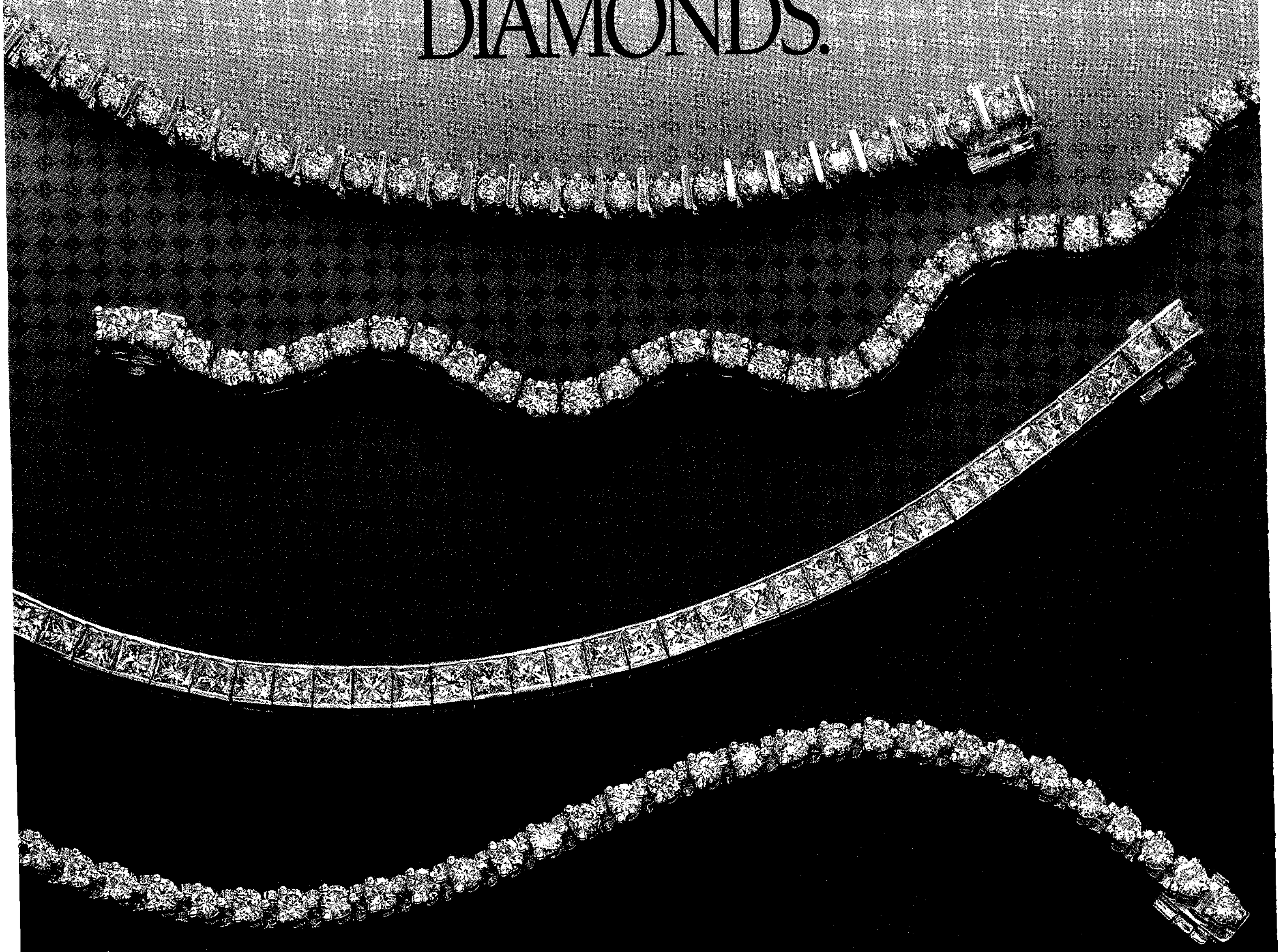

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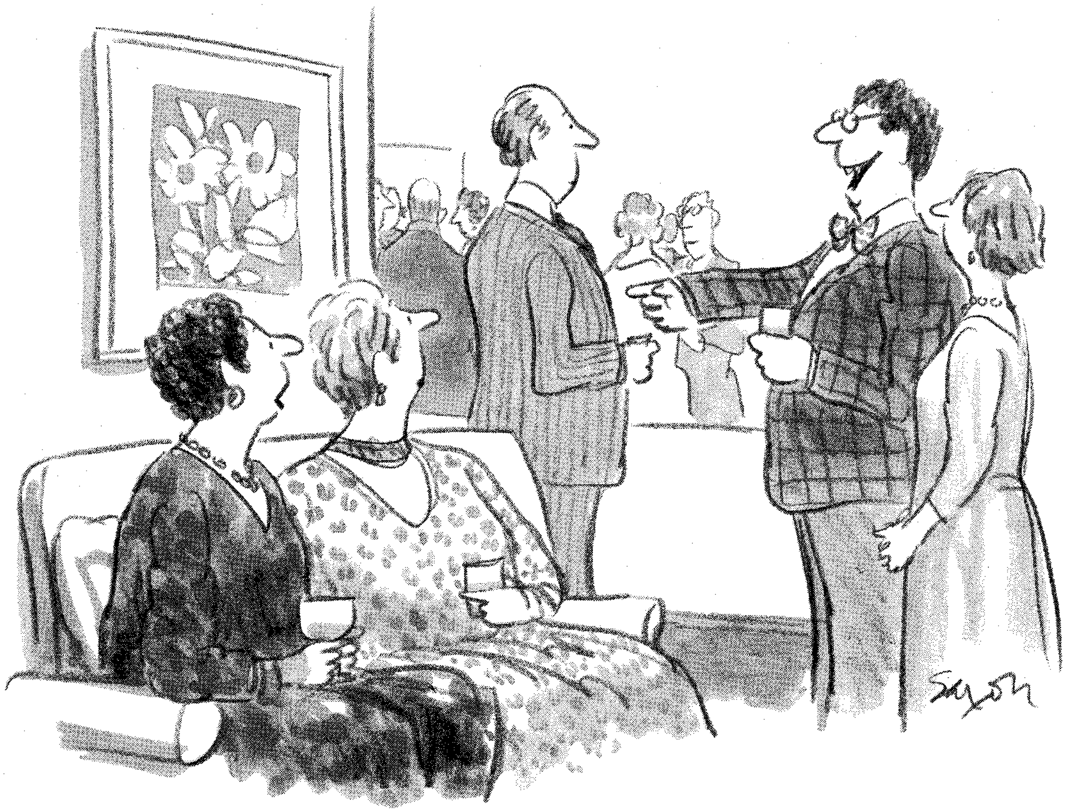
bear in case it came back.

He got off the phone and allowed himself a smile as he grabbed a beer from a twelve-pack I had bought across the street. We had arrived in Vernal, and I had treated us to a motel room. The mine wouldn't be unloading the truck for thirty-six hours. Lonnie lay on his bed, exhausted. The five-hour dash we had anticipated from Laramie had become an eight-hour nightmare. The last hundred miles, along narrow, twisting U.S. Highway 191—what Lonnie called a "five-thousand-shift road"—included two nine-per-cent grades, one of them several miles long. They were the steepest stretches he had ever driven—so steep that I held tight to the door latch in case we began rolling out of control. That last stretch, with its blind corners, blasting zones, deer crossings, and soft shoulders, had taken us an agonizing three hours to cover.



"He's an original, all right. Why she didn't spot that at the beginning I'll never know."

"It's days like this that make me just love my job," Lonnie said.

I pointed out that we had all night and the next day away from the truck, and that maybe the Chicago Bears, Lonnie's favorite team, would be on TV the next day.

"That's the truth, and I appreciate it. I'm just wondering how long I can keep this up."

In 1986, Lonnie had left Davis Transport in a huff. After several weeks on the road, he had unloaded in Billings, only three hundred and fifty miles east of Missoula. Instead of bringing him home for a few days, the dispatcher sent him back East. Lonnie, furious, deadheaded—drove with an empty trailer—back to the Davis lot. Early in 1987, Jim Dunn, a co-owner of Davis, met Lonnie on the street and said there might be some work for him if he wanted to return. Lonnie agreed to drive at least until November, no guarantees after that.

"Today's Halloween, right?" he said. "Well, that means November begins at midnight, unless they changed the calendar on me while we were stumbling through Get-Down Gulch back there. I could unload Monday and take her home. I'm tempted."

A few minutes later, he had reconsidered. "More likely, I'll see what they have. Maybe get a load over to the Gold Coast"—California—"get a nice long haul out of there to New York, pick up something back to California, and then get something that goes through Missoula. Then I'll call it good for the winter, Lord willing."

I suggested a toast to Thanksgiving and Christmas with the family.

Lonnie said "Hear, hear," took a final pull of beer, and looped the can into a wastebasket. "I'm having trouble sleeping, and this bear business won't help," he said. "I'm having premonitions—terrible thoughts. Think of the odds. So many miles, and unless you're really blessed, or really lucky, something will probably happen. Any day now, the weather can turn bad. And believe me, it's no fun driving when things start Nanookin' out here. My life has got to change. Look at me. My language has gone to the devil, and I've got me a kamikaze attitude—get home, get home—that can get a fella in some trouble." He took off his glasses and rubbed his eyes hard with both hands. "What it comes down to is that I'm pretty tired. Make that really tired. This has been a long year."

Lonnie's attitude does not necessarily reflect that of a majority of long-distance drivers. However, his driving career coincides with the advent of changes in the industry which have made the business objectively tougher on drivers. The Motor Carrier Act of 1980—in effect, the beginning of trucking deregulation—made it much easier for new companies to enter the business. Before 1980, the Interstate Commerce Commission could deny a company's application for authority to haul freight between certain points if other companies could show that the entrant would have an adverse effect on their operations—which, not surprisingly, they nearly always managed to do. The number of interstate for-hire truckload carriers in 1978 was about sixteen thousand six hundred. By

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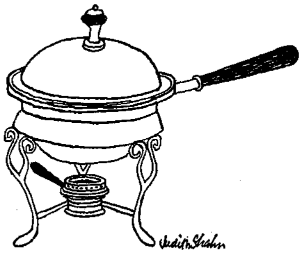
1986, the figure had risen to thirty-seven thousand. With so many companies competing for loads, rate-cutting became rampant, and trucking executives say that it all but eliminated once-comfortable profit margins. Accordingly, companies reduced expenditures in many areas—driver's wage increases among them. Department of Labor statistics for truck drivers show that wages increased just over twenty per cent between 1979 and 1986, while wages for all occupations increased nearly fifty per cent. In addition, the scramble for loads has forced companies to take whatever they can get, with the result that drivers are going farther and farther afield for longer and longer periods. Before 1980, most of Davis Transport's trucks travelled between Seattle and Chicago; now they travel regularly in every state. "Guys don't want to be out there away from their families so much," Jim Dunn told me. "Who would? Our driver turnover last year was something like eighty per cent. Now, half of that was on my option—culling thieves, bad attitudes, and incompetents. So eighty is actually forty, but that's still an enormous figure."



In 1987, in the course of seven and a half months, Lonnie drove ninety-five thousand miles. He travelled on nearly every east-west and north-south interstate highway, most of the system's bypass and spur routes, and untold numbers of divided and undivided state and county roads. He drove in every state of the contiguous United States except Maine. He delivered loads, or picked up loads, or fuelled, or spent the night, in scores of metropolitan areas and in such places as Renton, Washington; Rock Springs, Wyoming; Richwood, Kentucky; Senatobia, Mississippi; Massena, New York; Torrance, California; Riverdale, Iowa; Tucumcari, New Mexico; West Wendover, Nevada; Umatilla, Oregon; Xenia, Ohio; Beaver, Utah; New Holland, Pennsylvania; and Vidalia, Louisiana.

Lonnie's typical day on the road begins at seven or eight in the morning and ends between 9 P.M. and midnight. Sometimes he will drive only two or three hundred miles during that period. He might spend a good part of the morning or afternoon loading and tarping or untarping and unloading his cargo—lumber, grinding balls, lengths of PVC pipe, street-light poles, airplane parts, large coils of steel, telephone cable. He might spend the day waiting around a truck stop for the Davis dispatcher to find him a load, or twiddling his thumbs in a Michelin shop in Las Vegas while a pair of tires is replaced. Barring extraordinary traffic, minor breakdowns, bad weather, jammed loading docks, and inept or infuriatingly poky warehousemen and forklift drivers, he will chalk up about six hundred miles before calling it a day.

Occasionally, he travels much farther than that. On one trip, he left eastern Oregon on a Tuesday and delivered a load in Manassas, Virginia, that Friday, averaging more than eight hundred miles a day. During one stretch last fall, he drove, with various digressions, from Niantic, Connecticut, to Fullerton, California, then east as far as Wichita, then back to Southern California, and, finally, north to San Leandro, near San Francisco—seven thousand and twenty-two miles—in eleven days. "People all over the country were saying, 'Who was that masked man in the red truck?' " Lonnie says of that trip. "I tell you, this bad boy was a *major* blur on the road." The Oregon-Virginia and Niantic–San Leandro trips violated federal safety regulations, which state that a truck driver can drive only ten hours in an eighteen-hour period or a maximum of seventy hours in any eight-day period. A large majority of drivers regularly violate these rules—one estimate is seventy per cent—and say that they have to if they hope to make a decent living.

One 1987 industry estimate says that over ninety per cent of interstate trucking companies need drivers, an estimate borne out by the many "driver wanted" ads in trucking publications and on the backs of trailers. The reasons most often cited for the driver shortage—besides relatively low wages and increased time away from home—are more stringent drug and alcohol testing by companies and a new federal law prohibiting truckers from carrying driver's licenses from more than one

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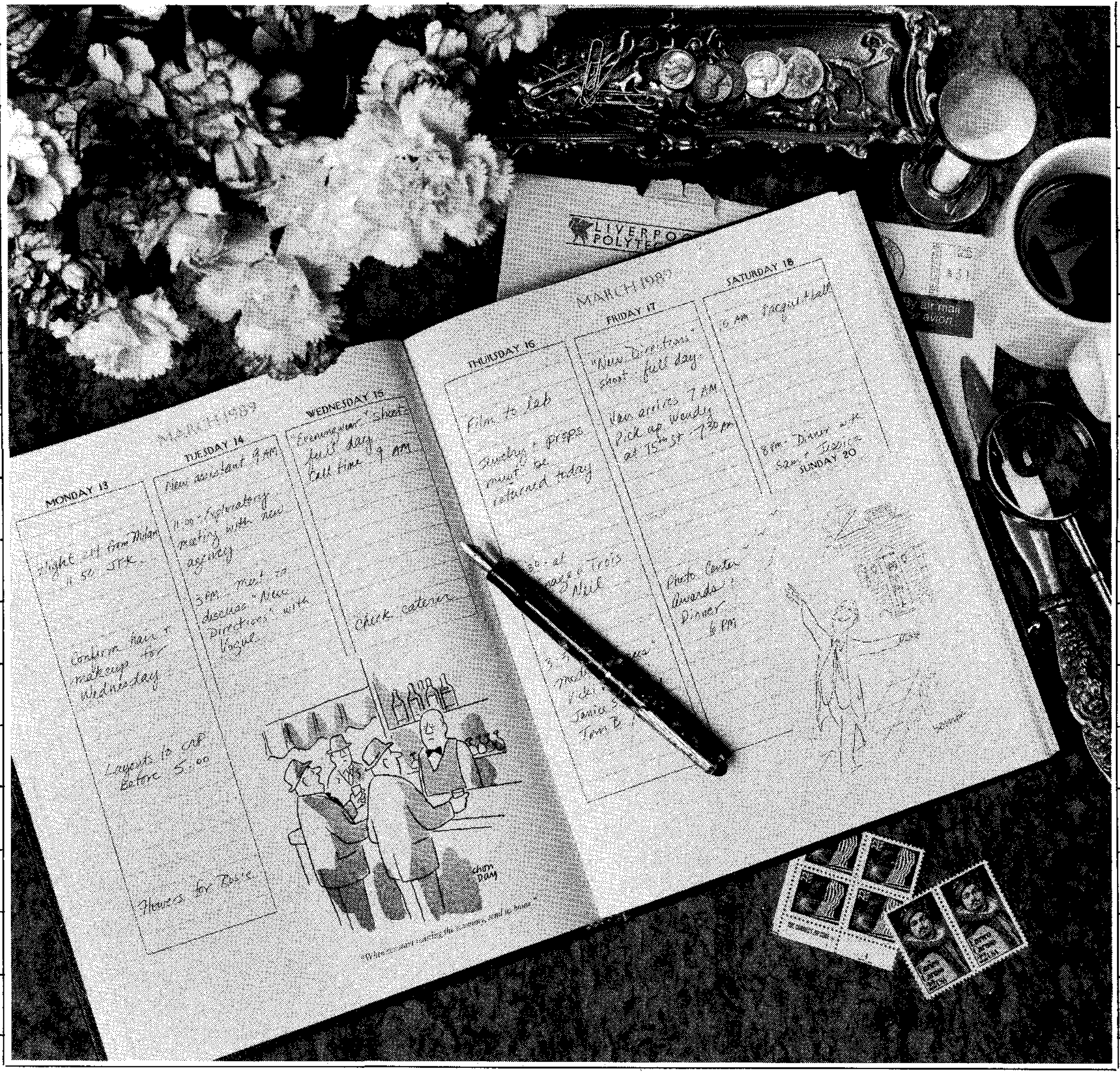

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state, a convenience that had allowed them to spread their traffic citations over any number of jurisdictions.

Surprisingly, probably no more than ten per cent of the country's long-haul drivers work under Teamster-negotiated wage contracts. Teamster wages in the eleven Western states amount to nearly thirty-eight cents a mile and just over fifteen dollars an hour during downtime, and contracts include a generous lodging provision. Schneider National Carriers, of Green Bay, Wisconsin, which is one of the largest of the non-union trucking companies, offers its drivers up to twenty-six cents a mile, in addition to an intricate bonus package—based on adherence to r.p.m., idling, and speed ceilings; on-time performance; and mileage free of accidents and cargo claims—that, according to the company's promotional literature, enables a driver to earn up to forty thousand dollars a year. Davis pays close to the prevailing non-union wage in the northern Rocky Mountain region. Last year, Lonnie received between eighteen and nineteen cents a mile during his seven and a half months. In addition, he accumulated a couple of hundred dollars in fuel-use bonuses and tarping fees, for a gross salary of about eighteen thousand dollars. Out of that, he bought all his meals and paid such road expenses as laundry. With one exception, he paid for his own lodging. He also spent, he estimates, a hundred dollars a month on phone calls home.

Gross yearly wages in the trucking business are deceptive, however. Schneider, for instance, guarantees three days home for every fifteen consecutive days on the road, but that means that the driver is working almost three hundred days a year, and the work doesn't stop when the engine is turned off. On the road, the job is essentially round-the-clock. When Lonnie isn't behind the wheel, he is tarping, doing paperwork, checking loads, catching a quick meal, or sleeping behind the cab in a sleeper the size of a small walk-in closet. Perhaps six times a year—when he is sick, or the weather is very severe, or he is dangerously tired—he sleeps in a motel. At all times, he is responsible for the truck and its load. On the basis of a twenty-four-hour day, even the rare forty-thousand-dollar-per-year driver makes just under six dollars an hour. In 1987, Lonnie's hourly wage was three dollars and seventy-five cents.

But while driving wages per hour are low, they are condensed. Lonnie's pre-tax wages are more than double what he could bring home from a non-union welding job in the same time period, and though the price of being away from the family is high Lonnie sees it as a means to an end—a way of salting away a little money, so that he can eventually undertake some stay-at-home means of making a living, like growing hothouse tomatoes, or raising a buffalo calf or two, or helping Debbi expand her stained-glass business, or doing a little horse logging.

"Some guys like it out on the road," Lonnie says. "Some don't. I do a lot of phone-calling out here, and my favorite number is 1-800-CRY-BABY. I've always thought of myself as a welder and a family man, but I've been out here a long time—longer than I thought. Pretty soon, if I'm not careful, I'm not gonna be just some guy who's out here driving a truck. I'm gonna be a truck driver."

A TRUCK—a "large car," in driver parlance—is a blatant piece of equipment. Its fenders jut out from the hood like staves sprung from an enormous vat. Its turn signals are half the size of a car's headlights. The cab bristles with mirrors—the long, rectangular primary mirrors, the round fish-eye mirrors under them, and the "dead man" mirror, which shows a driver the road directly below the passenger door. Hood latches, lug nuts, fuel tanks, antennas, exhaust stacks, battery case, cab steps, spare tire in its rack underneath the trailer—all are exposed for easy access. Air filters, cannisters the size of milk pails, are attached to the cab, near the doors. Toolboxes, storage boxes, air hoses, load-battening chains, snow chains, the cab's chassis itself, with its H-beams and rivets and hundreds of nuts and bolts, are all in plain sight. A truck is like a pair of trousers turned inside out on a clothesline; every functional secret faces the sun.

Lonnie drives what is commonly called a semi, or, in country-and-Western songs, an eighteen-wheeler. The majority of long-distance commercial vehicles in America are semis —short for tractor (cab, engine, steering axle, power train, single or tandem drive axles with four tires per axle, and, perhaps, a sleeper) and semi-

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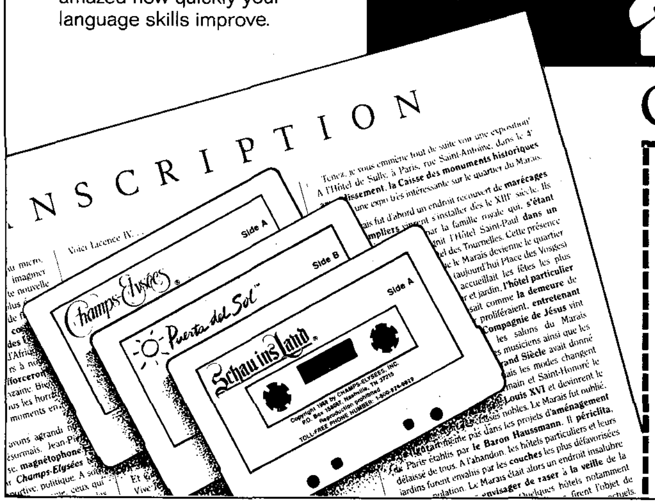

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"Oh, yeah, I meant to ask you—how's it going for women?"

trailer. A semitrailer, whether it is a flatbed, such as Lonnie pulls, or a van, a tank, or a hopper, has permanent axles only toward its rear. It cannot move down the road unless it is supported in front. In Lonnie's rig, the support comes from the tractor itself. In other cases, a single- or double-axled converter dolly is attached to the semitrailer. This full trailer is coupled behind a semitrailer to form a set of doubles, or wiggle wagons. Triples—two trailers attached to the semitrailer—are appearing with more frequency along many interstates. Sometimes a full trailer is attached to a truck—a single vehicle incorporating both cab and container; this combination is called a truck and trailer.

Lonnie's tractor is a conventional model, similar in design to most passenger cars in that the engine projects forward from the cab. Another design, called the cab-over, places the cab on top of the engine, so that the tractor looks like an enormous windowed box. The driver's position over the engine and steering axle means that the ride is louder, rougher, and hotter than that in a conventional design, but because there is no hood the visibility is better. Most cab-overs have a shorter wheelbase—and therefore a shorter turning radius—than conventionals. Since the passage of the Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, which forbids states to restrict a semi's over-all length on certain designated routes, the compact cab-overs, which accounted for something like forty per cent of the new-truck market in 1983, have declined in popularity; they are now only about twenty per cent of the market. Their most common uses are for intracity freight and among volume-conscious carriers who regularly haul lightweight, or "balloon," freight. They are making a modest comeback, however, because the use of ever-longer trailers has made their short-turn ability attractive.

A modern semi averages between five and seven miles per gallon; the fuel crises of the nineteen-seventies, and deregulation, with its ensuing slimmer profit margins and cutthroat competition for loads, have speeded development of more efficient, lower-r.p.m./higher-torque engines. In addition, basic tractor designs have changed. More than half a truck's energy is expended in overcoming wind resistance; consequently, engineers have rounded off cab corners, developed sharply sloping hoods for conventionals, added panels and tabs that extend behind the tractor to reduce turbulence between tractor and trailer, angled windshields from the vertical, and, most conspicuously, attached to cab roofs large, bulbous fairings, some of which can be raised or lowered from the dashboard to match the height of the load. Many companies (Davis is not among them) are also installing in-cab computers that record every mile of a truck's performance—r.p.m. levels and miles travelled at each level, speed, number of miles travelled with brakes on, and the like—enabling them to confirm fuel-use figures, and reprimand lead-footed drivers.

Lonnie's normal behind-the-wheel posture is a seemingly casual one. While most of the time he steers with both hands, he often—especially along empty stretches—rests his right hand on his knee. Sometimes he will cross one leg over the other, turning toward the center of the cab, as if he had an aisle seat in a theatre. But heading east on Interstate 80 in Pennsylvania with the panelling for Lodi, he was all grim business, hunched over the steering wheel with both hands tight, his eyes darting between the road and the mirrors.

Interstate 80 in Pennsylvania is very likely the most abominably built stretch of major highway in America. Potholed, roughly patched and seamed, it is an uncomfortable, bumpy struggle to negotiate in a car. In a semi—even a fully loaded one, which generally gives a much smoother ride than an empty—it is a horror of load-shifting, spine-mashing, traffic-jammed inadequacy. Pennsylvania's weather and geography add to the road's reputation. Lonnie says he has almost never driven through the state except in mist, ground fog, snow, or drizzle.

"This state is one-quarter up, one-quarter down, one-quarter left curve, and one-quarter right curve," he told me. "And these East Coast trucks"—trucks with smaller engines than trucks that have to regularly negotiate the Rockies, the Cascades, and the Sierras—"are junk buckets, road commodes. They go twenty miles an hour up and two hundred miles an hour down. You

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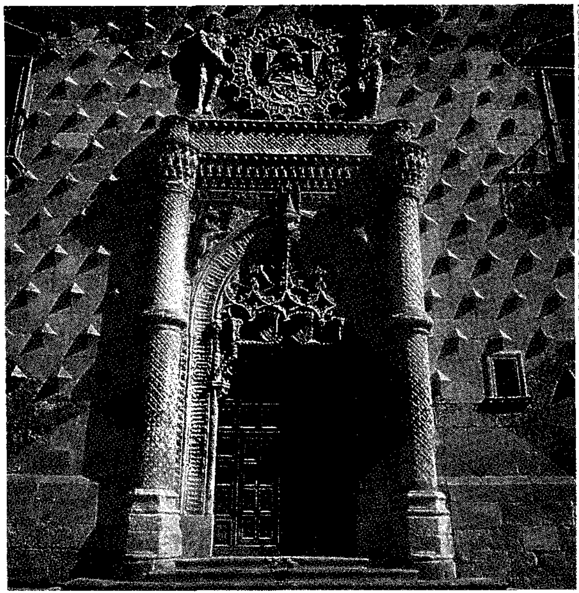
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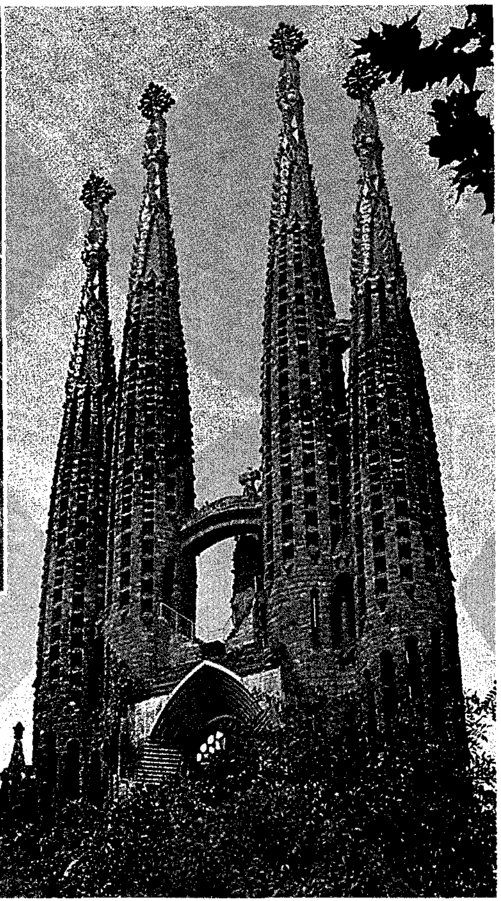
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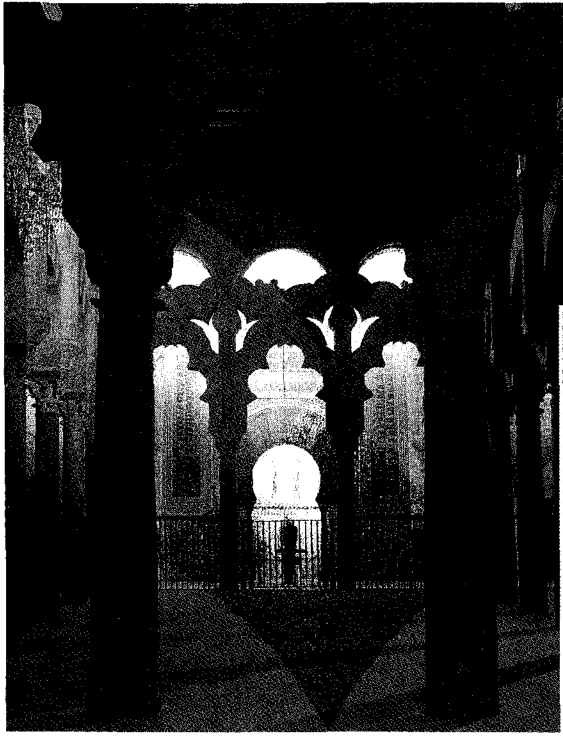
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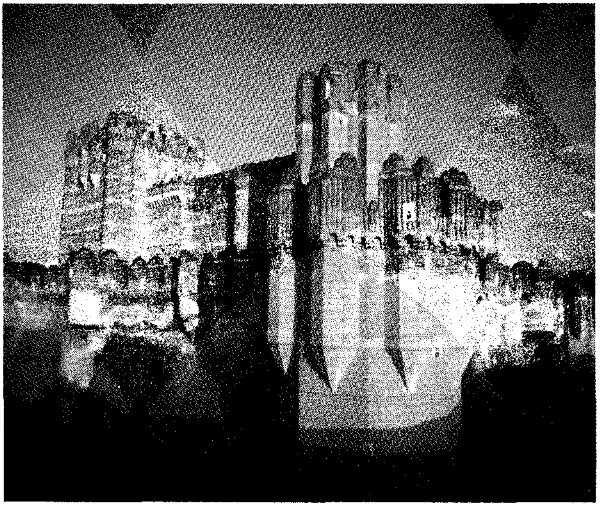
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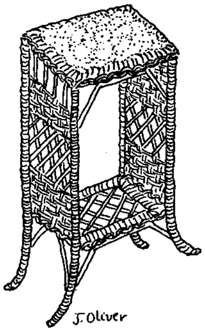
can travel a long ways on smooth roads without wearing yourself out, but here after a hundred miles you're ready to commit mass murder. I don't know if the problem is that a person can't be a contractor in Pennsylvania without being somebody's brother-in-law or that nobody can build a road here without showing proof of a lobotomy first."

The last hundred miles or so before the Delaware Water Gap, at the New Jersey border, were some of the most frightening I have ever travelled. The road wound through narrow valleys, becoming more crowded at every on-ramp, mainly with trucks. The surface was slick from an earlier rain. The increased traffic, the high roadcuts, their brows thick with dripping vegetation that overhung the outside lane, and the fact that a waist-high concrete divider instead of a generous median separated eastbound and westbound traffic all combined to make the road seem the width of a supermarket aisle —an aisle packed with huge, lumbering, sixty-mile-an-hour carts.

Traffic patterns were erratic. The "slow uphill, fast downhill" syndrome was evident, and there was much pushing and shoving, with trucks running up the backs of other trucks, and cars racing out of danger like cats down an alley. The curves were tight, and the wet night air hung heavy with the smell of waterlogged vegetation, diesel fuel, and, occasionally, overheated brakes.



"H. O. Wolding up ahead," Lonnie announced the first time we caught this last, rough odor. He was referring to a pair of trucks that had been badgering us for thirty minutes or so, roaring past on the downhill and then forcing us to pass them as they struggled uphill, running with their high beams, which struck our rearview mirrors with blinding brilliance.

"What a fella should carry for situations like this is a few boxes of BBs," Lonnie said. "And then if someone doesn't have the sense to turn down his lights or quit tailgating, you could open a box and throw a few hundred of them out the window. Can you imagine what someone would think if he's driving along and suddenly there's this PING PING PING PING all along his chassis?"

I suggested a small automatic weapon attached to the hood with a trigger inside the cab—perhaps on the shift lever.

"No, no. You don't want to kill 'em. We're talking—you know—reëducation. I swear, one of these days I'm gonna hook up a couple of discothèque strobes on the back of the trailer. Then, when the time is right, flip a switch in the cab. One shot from those and there wouldn't be a high beam left on clear back to Minnesota."

Just over the Pennsylvania line, in Columbia, New Jersey, we pulled into a crowded truck stop, where Lonnie's rig stuck out fore and aft in a long line of shorter semis. It was nearly midnight, but the place was busy. Eight trucks were lined up for fuelling, under high, brightly lit canopies, their drivers washing windshields, reaching over from the tall wheeled platforms that most truck stops provide. Other trucks filed by us, looking for parking places. Drivers, singly and in pairs, crossed the wet lot toward the restaurant and the showers and the fuel desk. Neither Lonnie nor I felt like sleeping after our wild ride, and as he worked on his logbook and I read a magazine I began to notice an extraordinary amount of foot traffic in and out of the passenger side of the truck next to us, a beat-up semi from Little Rock, with a large Confederate-flag decal low on its door. The driver appeared once, when he stepped down from the cab to get rid of some beer cans and urinate under his trailer. He looked like Waylon Jennings—a beefy guy in his forties, with a beard, a black T-shirt, jeans, tennis shoes, and lank dark hair almost to his shoulders.

A quarter of an hour later, I asked Lonnie if he smelled marijuana smoke.

"Yeah. I noticed. That guy next door is either dealing or just having a business burn while he's selling whatever load he's hauling or a few spare truck parts. Did you notice the car that's driven by about four times already? It's probably out looking for a stolen truck or a woman."

A few minutes later, Lonnie closed his logbook and put away his pen. "Listen, I had a brain attack," he said. "You shouldn't sleep out tonight." The first night, in Beach, North Dakota, I had slept under the trailer in my sleeping bag, using a spare tarp as a

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ground cloth. The next night, near Green Bay, I'd slept under a tree in a roadside park, and the night after that —last night—in Nowhere, Ohio, I had made a comfortable bed on the trailer between the front of the load and a headboard. "Not at this place. It's a little rough. Not that there aren't rougher. There's room for both of us back there."

I was grateful for Lonnie's offer; the truck stop seemed thick with a careless, low-grade corruption. It was little trouble to rearrange the sleeper and transfer some of Lonnie's gear into the cab proper. In a few minutes, we were stretched out toes to nose in the sleeper, under the comforting bulk of Lonnie's quilt. With the doors locked and Lonnie's short, nearly silent prayer of thanks finished, we drifted to sleep. It was quiet and warm and dark in the little box, and we could have been anywhere in America. I slept well, removed from both the highway and the rude neighborhood outside the windows of our now quiet, now stationary home.

TRAVELLING east from the West in any vehicle is a journey down an ever-narrowing hallway. When that vehicle is a sixty-five-foot-long, thirteen-foot-high, eight-foot-wide semi, and when one makes the entire journey in only a few days, the sense of growing constriction is greatly heightened. Through the plains, a truck pushes along the huge tabletop of land—where even trains a mile long are visible engine to caboose—past distant benches and ranges, like some stalwart, husky bug. Then come the monuments of the Mississippi Valley—water towers, grain elevators, church steeples—portending the numbing, platted squeeze of Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, all row and angle and hedge, where the truck seems larger, more rampant. By Pennsylvania and western New Jersey, all order has disappeared, as the truck worms through the thick, deciduous tussle and clutter toward the shocking clamor of Greater New York City.

Four days earlier, we had been in western Montana, riding beside still-green meadows that flanked the Clark Fork River, under skies as bright and scrubbed as a first-quarter cheerleader. Now we were parked in front of a small factory in Lodi, on a battered, busy (U.P.S. trucks and Saabs) street lined on one side by a weed-thick railroad spur and on the other by printing-ink manufacturers, under steamy ochre skies. Two workers who met us as Lonnie pulled alongside the curb told us that most trucks backed into the loading area, a hundred feet up the factory's driveway. Lonnie walked back the length of the truck to survey a possible approach. The driveway met the street at an oblique angle, and a jutting corner of the customer's cinder-block building, a large power pole, and a berm of trash (pallets, pails, chunks of wood) made it a dogleg affair. Lonnie shook his head and asked one of the workers if someone could move a station wagon that was in our way. The worker fetched the car's owner, a tall, thin man, who was followed by a larger, much rounder man.

"What's the trouble?" the large man said, in an accusatory tone.

"I'm from Davis Transport, and we have this load of boards from Oshkosh. I'm just getting the lay of the land, and if you can't unload me from here it'd help some to move the car."

"It's no problem moving the car. The loads are too tippy for the forklift out here. I don't see the trouble backing in. I get thirty loads like this a year, and there's never any discussion. They just roll right in."

Lonnie flicked some concrete crumbs from a gouged cinder block, about trailer-high, on the corner of the building.

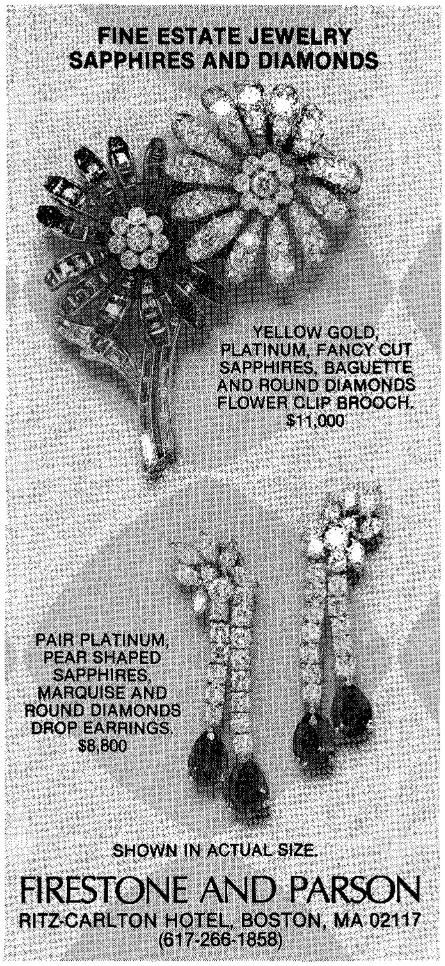
"I can see you get those loads," he said, smiling. "But we got a different situation today, one of driver skills."

"What? Who's the driver?"

"Me."

Lonnie turned and walked back to the cab and climbed in. "I'm gonna swing around to get lined in as well as I can," he told me. "If you wouldn't mind playing flagman for a bit to keep all these NASCAR drivers from trying to run under the trailer, I'd appreciate it. Thirty loads a year. Right, but with East Coast trucks—forty-foot trailers and sixteen-foot tractors. Those things have a turning radius about like Jenna's tricycle. I wonder sometimes how I manage to hold this job, with all these really *fine* drivers waiting to jump in the truck and show people how it's supposed to be done."

He pulled forward one truck length, edging toward the center of the road, and then began backing up—turning the steering wheel one way and then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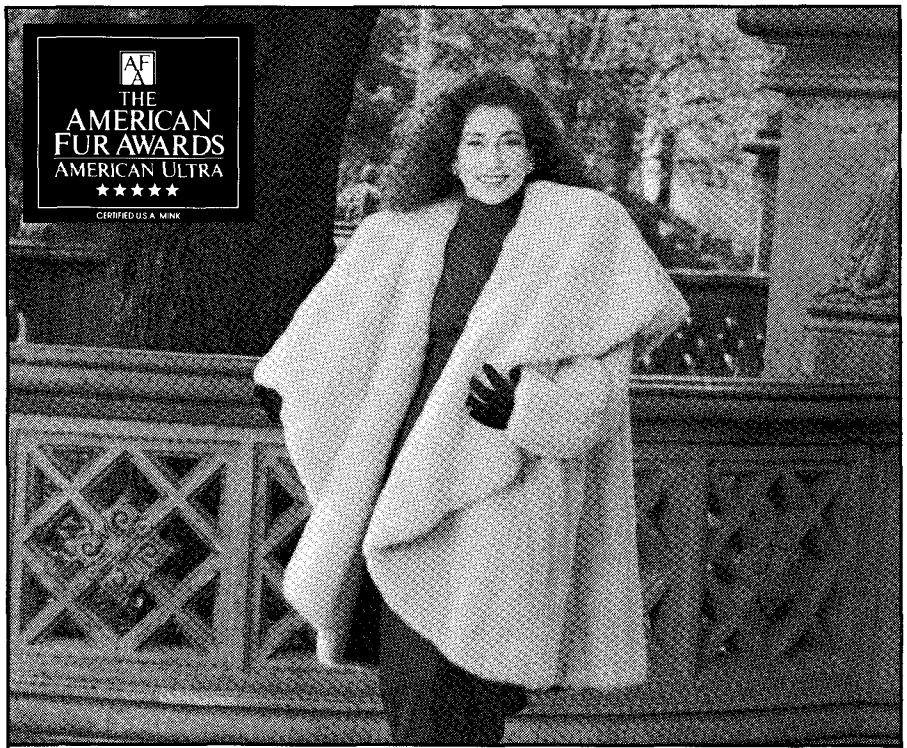

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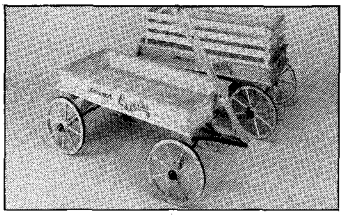

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the other, pushing the trailer along in a soft, snaking pattern. In one pass, he had the butt of the trailer in the driveway, but at a cross angle. The second pass improved matters, and on the third the entire tractor crashed through the dusty roadside flora across the street. ("I wasn't worried about broken bottles as much as running over a body in there," Lonnie said later. "Jimmy Hoffa, maybe.") After a final assault on the weed patch, the trailer was lined up. Lonnie slid it straight back to the loading door, allowing the traffic, which by then was ten deep on either side of the truck, to pass. He missed the chipped protruding corner of the building by two inches.

We spent the next ten minutes removing three large red tarps that covered the load and ten yellow nylon straps that secured the load to the trailer. Half an hour later, working just ahead of the forklift, we had folded and stowed the tarps in a large aluminum side box under the trailer and put the rolled straps in a tool compartment under the sleeper. All but three of the pallets had been unloaded.

A big American sedan appeared from the far end of the driveway and stopped hard behind the trailer, jumping forward on its springs. A young man in a business suit came up to where Lonnie and I stood talking and sweating, and pointed to the trailer. "Whose truck is this?" he barked.

Lonnie's sunglasses turned briefly toward my sunglasses, then back to the driver's sunglasses. "I don't know," Lonnie said. "Why?"

"How am I supposed to get out?" he said. He turned, swore, and got into his car. For the next five minutes or so, as the last of the pallets came off the truck, and Lonnie got the papers signed, we watched the man as he drove around a maze of chain-link-fenced lots trying to find an exit. Finally, he returned to the driveway, stopping within inches of the trailer, and fumed into the office as Lonnie pulled wide into the street.

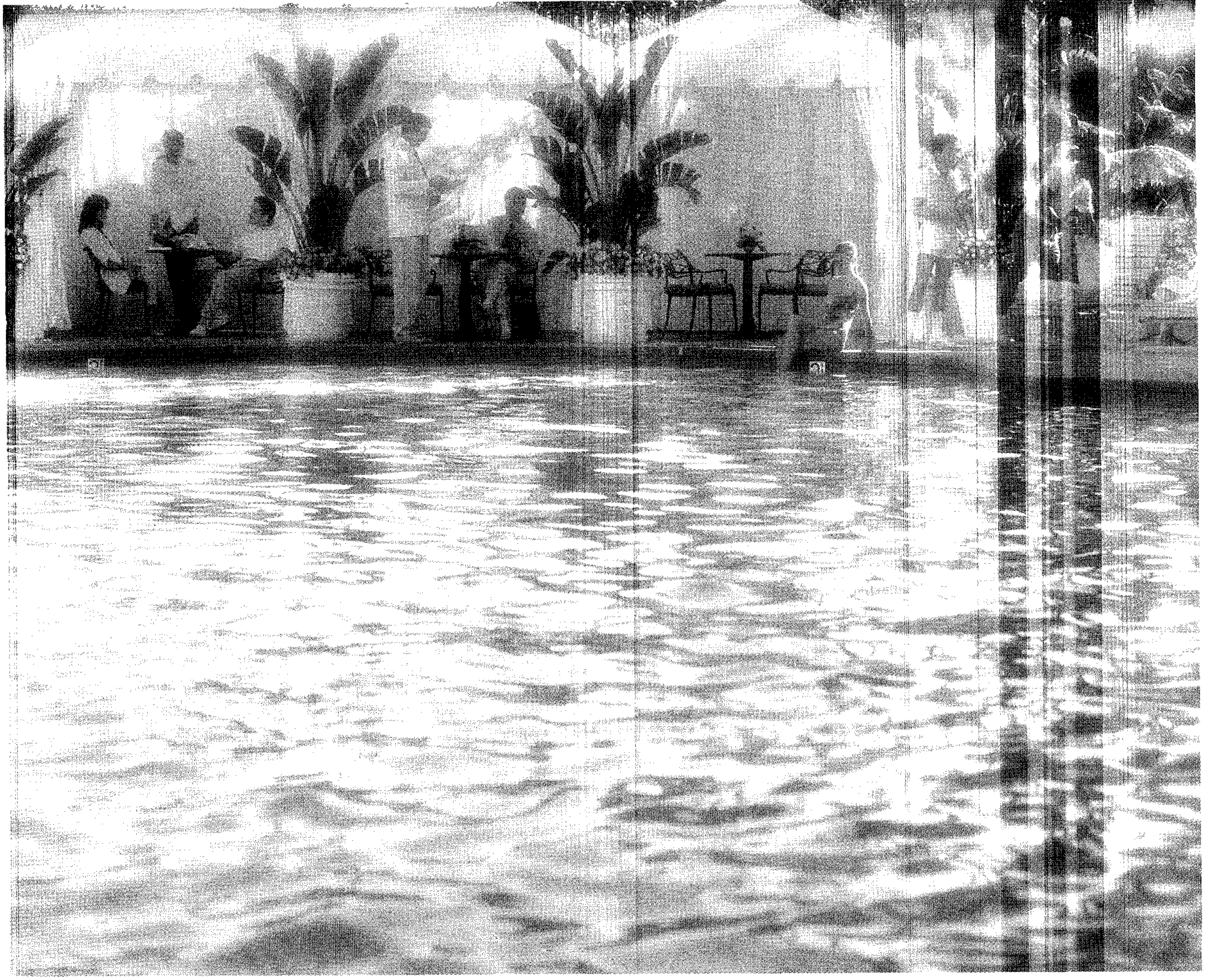
"I guess I shouldn't have been that way back there with Mr. Elite," Lonnie said, "but he came at us all wrong. Anyway, I saw him looking around at cars, so I think he's an insurance adjuster. You don't often get a chance to hang one of them out to dry."

Three blocks away, Lonnie stopped and got some directions at a motor-vehicle-license-testing bureau. He got back in the truck. "But it wasn't a kind thing to do. It would have been easy enough to help him. I'd've just summoned the swami, and he could have levitated the truck. People do get themselves excited out here! Did you hear him slamming around? Five more minutes, he'd have got out and chewed himself a hole through the fence." Lonnie laughed, and bit at the air like a hungry rodent. "Don't you just *love* it back here?"

"THIS truck can go about anywhere in North America," Lonnie said. "It's got papers for forty-eight states and most of Canada, but it doesn't at *all* like to come here to the Far East. These little bitty cities like New York and Philadelphia and Boston, they were built for horses and buggies, not trucks. Drive around these cages in a large car like this, there's gonna be trouble sooner or later."

He had just finished parking the truck in the northeast corner of the nearly empty lot of the Crow's Nest restaurant and lounge in Hackensack. The rig sprawled across eight parking slots, looking like a too large schoolboy seated at a too small desk. It dwarfed the Toyotas and Nissans parked nearby; it dwarfed the Buicks and Chevrolets. Its trailer began partway across the back wall of a Carvel store. The trailer bed, now empty, with its high-tension steel frame released into slight convexity, spanned a delicatessen and a Sir Speedy printshop. Its cab—shiny brick-red with a dramatic coral-and-brown lightning bolt on each side and a long hood—ended halfway across the width of a small flooring outlet. The compact, comprehensible vehicle of the Rockies and the Plains had taken on the scope of the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge.

Lonnie had spotted the lot and the delicatessen from a busy intersection half a block away and figured it might be a good base camp—offering room to park the truck, as well as coffee and a phone, and allowing him to stop wandering the narrow streets, which were thick with honking, irritated drivers. After delivering the panelling to Lodi, he had two things on his mind: calling the Davis dispatcher to see where his next load was coming from—"Talk to the man and see how he wants us to act"—and getting the hell out of New Jersey. He used the delicatessen's pay phone, and returned to the truck hold-



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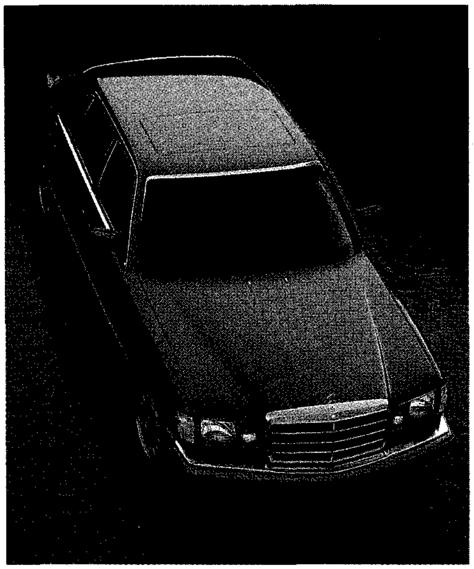

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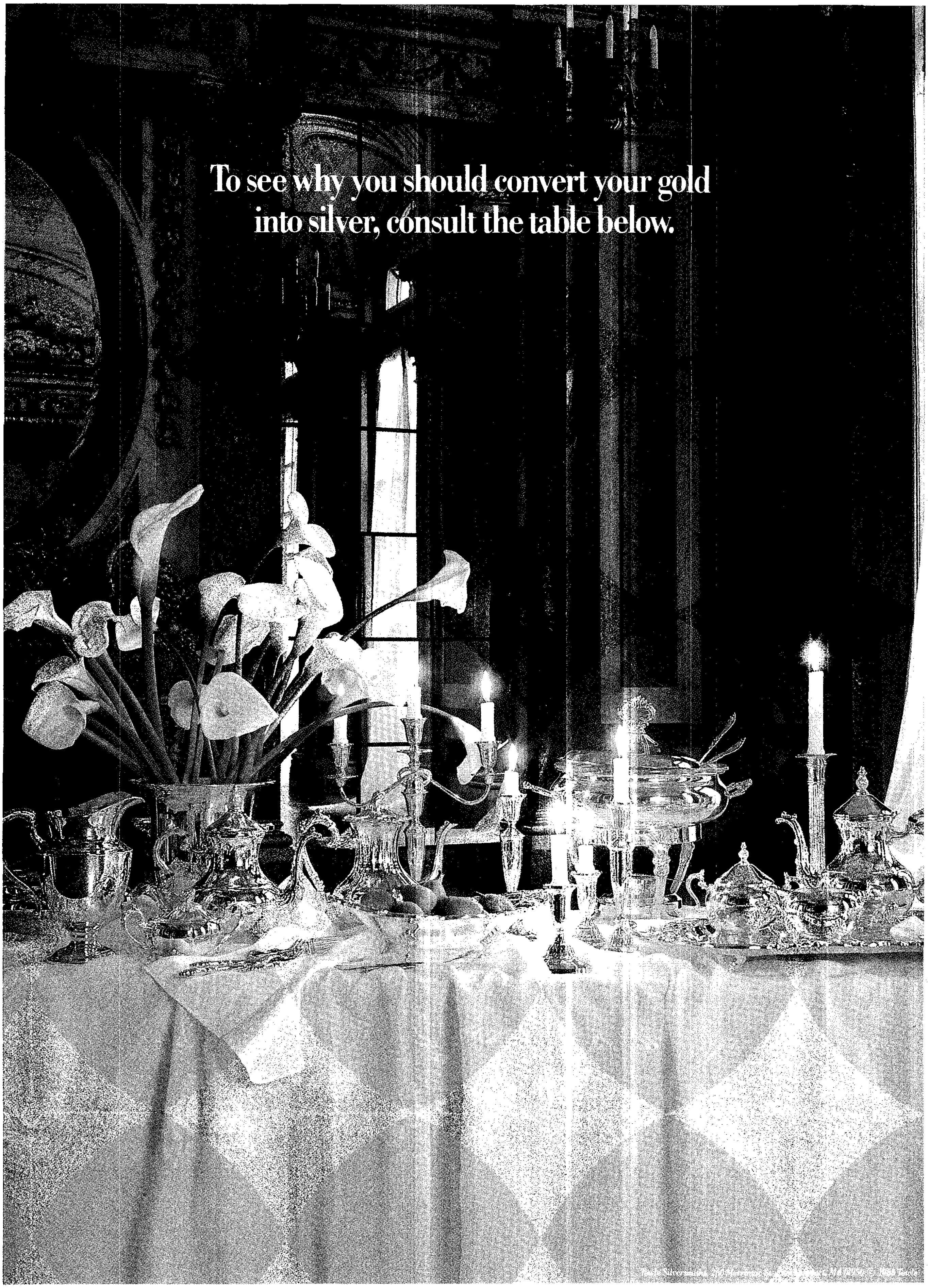
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ing a coffee cup in one hand and a spiral notebook in the other. I asked him where we were going next, and he shrugged and shook his head. "Nothing for us yet."

I asked him what would happen if we didn't get a load before businesses closed for the weekend. It was eleven o'clock on a Thursday morning, but, as Lonnie explained it, we were not in bad shape. We were a little less than four hundred miles east of Pittsburgh, and about the same distance south of Massena, New York, near the Canadian border—well within striking distance of a Friday pickup. Davis Transport had regular customers in both places. In a pinch—an exhausting pinch—we could leave around noon and make Charleston, West Virginia, or Toledo, or even Cincinnati, in time to load before the weekend.

"God, Lonnie, why not Atlanta or Chicago?" I said, thumbing through the atlas. "What's eight hundred miles to a couple of hombres like us?"

Maybe I didn't sound skeptical enough, or maybe Lonnie was just playing straight man, but he thought for a minute, frowning, and said, "O.K. if we were in Wyoming or New Mexico, but remember, we gotta shake and bake through Pennsylvania or down 95, and you cannot make time back here."

If Lonnie is in St. Louis, he will talk of "running on over" to Kansas City. If he's in Salt Lake City, a trip to Los Angeles or Chicago will be "a run on down to Shaky" or "a run across to Windy." There is nothing of the blowhard about him; these seemingly meiotic statements are merely the honest assessments of someone who drives three thousand miles or so a week, week in and week out. (He is also uncannily accurate concerning arrival times; in instance after instance, he predicted the time of our appearance somewhere six hundred miles away with spooky precision.)

As it turned out, we spent part of the afternoon in Hackensack and part of it in Manhattan, where I showed Lonnie the Empire State Building and Times Square, and dissuaded him from buying some jewelry for Debbi from a shop on Forty-second Street—though, as Lonnie said, "the prices were hard to beat."

Lonnie called the Davis dispatcher again, from a phone booth in Times Square, and the dispatcher told us that he thought he had something for us near Pittsburgh, and that we should head that way and call him the following morning for details. As we returned to the Port Authority Bus Terminal, Lonnie was taken aback by the movie titles displayed along the way.

"What do you think, Lonnie? Is this Sodom or Gomorrah?" I asked him.

"I think we got the Twin Cities themselves here."

We made a few more phone calls, and a little past dusk we were crossing the Poconos again. Sitting in the cab of the truck watching the miles peel away was beginning to feel downright normal. The evening was cool and damp, but the inside of the cab was a warm and cozy cockpit. The red dome light and the soft amber glow from the dash—sixteen gauges, eight toggle switches (including mirror defrosters), and a handful of dials—made it seem as if we were sitting by a small fireplace in a cabin in the woods, looking out at the darkness through a picture window.

The news from home was good, Lonnie said an hour or so out of New Jersey. "Debbi's got three dozen ears of corn frozen, and the tomatoes are doin' O.K. I talked to John—he is a *major* artist. He entered a 'McGruff, the Crime Dog' contest and won, and his drawing is hanging in Washington, D.C., right now. When he was little, before Jenna came along, he and Debbi rode with me on a trip. We went to Seattle and saw the zoo and the aquarium, and all the way he was back in the sleeper, drawing. At age six, with the truck rolling, with just a pencil, he drew pictures I couldn't do sitting still in a whole art room. Jenna is fine, too. She was glad to hear from her dad. She always is. Once, we were talking and she got real quiet. I wondered what was wrong, and Debbi got on the phone and said a jay had landed on the windowsill and Jenna was staring at it. At our house, we got jays, hummingbirds, owls, blue grouse, deer, and even a moose that comes Bullwinklin' around some."

The more Lonnie spoke of home and family, the more rapidly he talked. I might as well not have been in the cab, he paused so rarely. I imagined that if I

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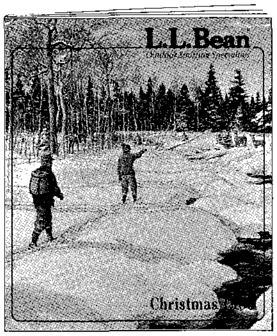

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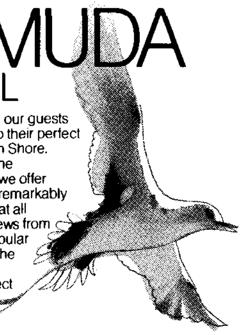

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hadn't been there the lengthy, rambling monologue would have been taking place anyway, a silent, highballing train of thought.

"There's all sorts of things to do. God, I wish I was home more. I want to insulate a workroom downstairs, get a basement shower put in, another bathroom upstairs, a linen closet, a countertop in the kitchen, find a buffalo calf to raise. I have all sorts of brain attacks about ways to get out of the truck. If you could build some greenhouses and grow tomatoes all year round—now, I ask you, who wouldn't want fresh tomatoes in February instead of those cardboard supermarket ones? I wonder if buffalo calves come expensive. I'd like to go to electronics school, or maybe use my welding and devise ornamental ironwork, or—and this is a real good idea—make a whole series of T-shirts for truck drivers, each one showing a weigh station somewhere. Those'd go like hotcakes."

Lonnie talked about learning to be a better woodworker, and his plans for making a butter churn, a spinning wheel, a butcher block with knife slots and drawers. His elaborate description of the butcher block, followed by a detailed explanation of each step in the manufacturing process, took him most of a half hour to finish.

"I'm lucky. Debbi is a doofer person. She's always doing something for someone, like bringing cupcakes for opening day at John's school. He's always bringing a brown bag filled with something to share with the class. She's the Secretary of Transportation, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Secretary of the Treasury. There is *no* way we could make ends meet on my salary if it wasn't for her bargain-hunting and general taking charge. She'd rather find a bargain on a twenty-five-cent pair of bluejeans at the thrift shop or a garage sale than treat herself to a twenty-five-dollar pair of designer ones.

"It's hard on her. Here I come home, after so long, and she's been with the kids all this time, and they've been going 'Nyah, nyah, nyah.' Sometimes she gets a sitter and meets me in Missoula. We'll go out to dinner and drinks, or go to a show and get a room at a motel, or even stay the night in the truck—you know, make an adventure of it, an occasion. Some drivers' wives, they would say, 'Oh, no, I don't want to go in that ol' truck.' The truck, the work, the life, becomes a negative factor rather than a positive one, a bond. If we stay in the truck or, better, if she goes on a trip with me, then she gets a feel for my world—what it's like out here."

I thought we might drive all the way to Pittsburgh that night, but despite Lonnie's intensity (at times he bounced on the seat as he spoke), and all the coffee we had drunk, we were done in by the long day, the miles, and the relentless darkness. Around midnight, Lonnie pulled into one of four sprawling truck stops defining the junction of Interstates 76 and 81, west of Harrisburg, and we slept.

EACH of the two trips I made with Lonnie that fall lasted ten days and covered five thousand miles. The first took us from Missoula through Green Bay and Oshkosh to Lodi, then back through Youngstown, St. Louis, Kansas City, and Aberdeen, South Dakota, to Montana. The second shot straight from Montana to Pittsburgh, retraced the St. Louis–Kansas City leg of the first trip, swung through Utah, and ended in Los Angeles.

Beginning a truck trip for a long-haul carrier like Davis Transport is a bit like heading out on an ocean voyage: there is no small amount of necessary preparation, and there is no real knowing when you will return. On the bright afternoon of our first embarkation from the Davis yard—the Sunday of Labor Day weekend—Lonnie made his safety inspection (brakes, fluid levels, tire pressure, lights) and then climbed into the semi's cab and started the engine, inserting a key and holding down two buttons on the dashboard, near the door: the starter itself and an override button, which keeps the engine running even though the oil pressure hasn't built up to an acceptable level. The truck is equipped with a complex shutdown system, which sets off wailing alarms if the oil pressure drops too low or the temperature climbs too high. As Lonnie explained, "that way, if someone's up there, and maybe he's tired or not paying attention, he isn't going to make an expensive mistake." Our load was forty thousand pounds of milled cedar bound for a Weyerhaeuser distributor in Green Bay.

Lonnie climbed back to earth—back to his family, who had come, as usual, to see him off. He hoisted Jenna, a tiny,

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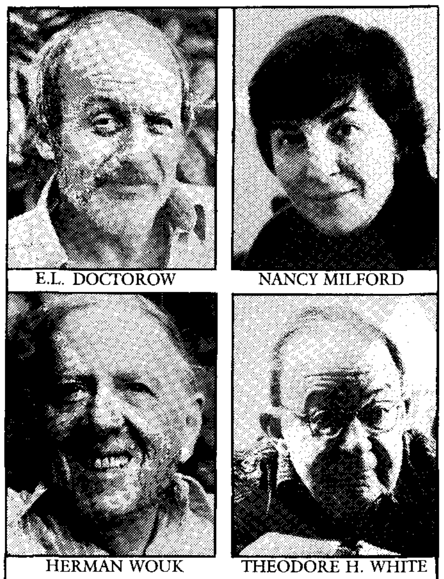

E.L. DOCTOROW
NANCY MILFORD
HERMAN WOUK
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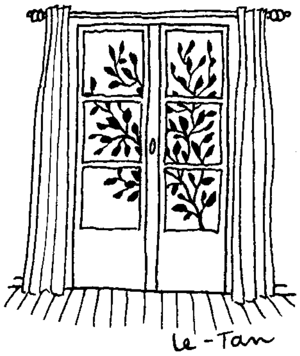
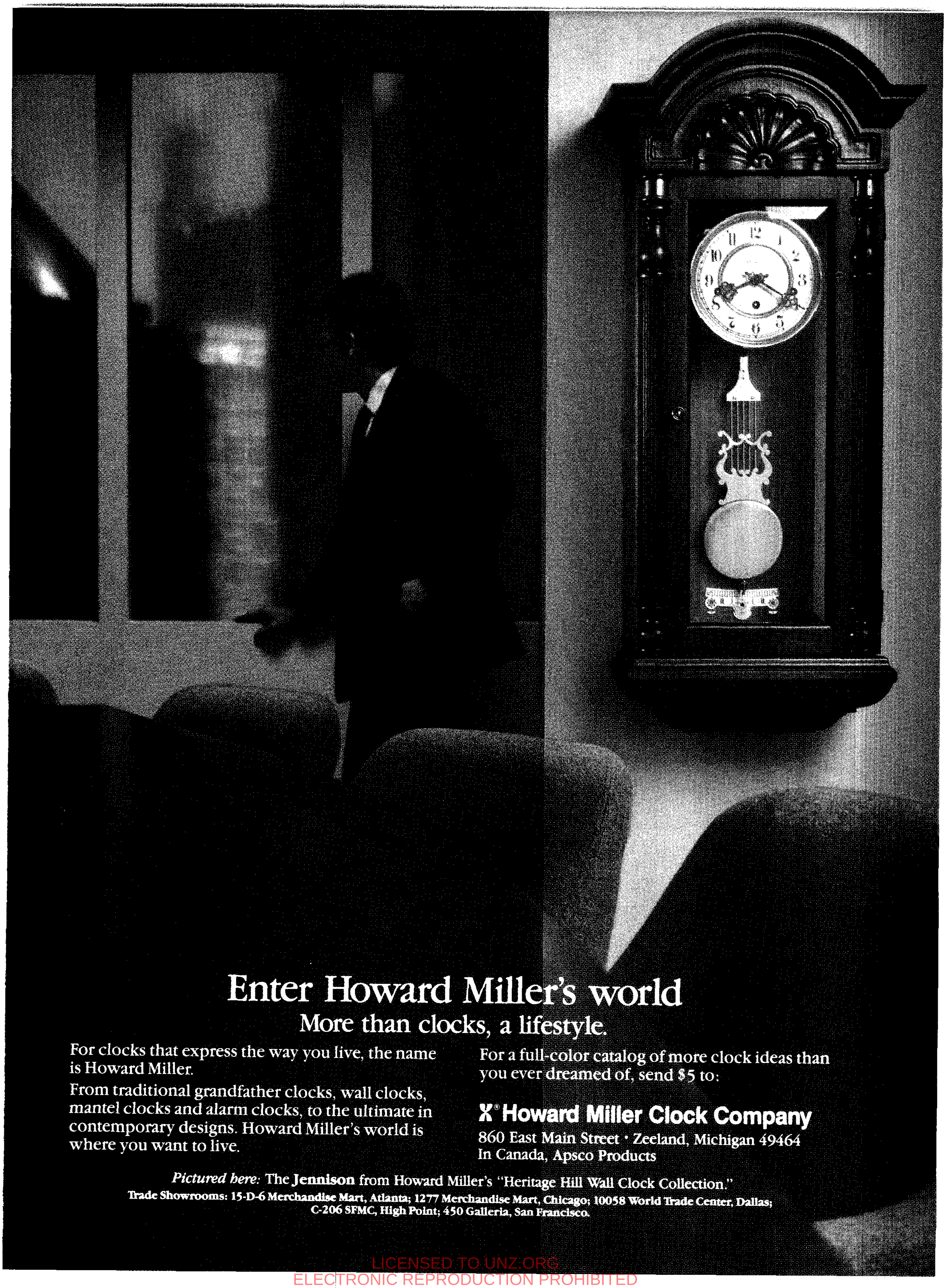
doll-like little girl with white-blond hair, into the driver's seat. She scooted to its very edge and, with her legs dangling far above the foot pedals, opened her arms wide to grab the steering wheel. The wheel is just shy of twenty-two inches across, and she looked as if she were twirling a jumbo pizza. As the truck's grumpy cold-engine gurgle settled into a deep, even rumble, John, Debbi, and Lonnie began transferring supplies from the Umphletts' station wagon to the truck, bucket-brigade style: John, a tall, pale, studious-looking boy, at the car's tailgate; Lonnie at the truck's passenger door; and Debbi, a soft-voiced, trim, pretty woman of thirty-one with a heart-shaped face, large wire-rimmed glasses, and straight dark-blond hair that fell to her waist, inside the cab.



First came overshirts and jackets, which Debbi hung on hangers along a metal bar at one end of the sleeper. Then came three cardboard boxes, one of them holding extra clothes (pants, T-shirts, underwear, socks), another containing research material (Rand McNally's "Motor Carriers' Road Atlas;" a stack of city and regional folding maps; a handful of new logbooks; a red spiral notebook, in which Lonnie records phone numbers, names, and locations of customers, their hours of operation, and information on their loading procedures and preferences; a blue three-ring notebook for recording mileage, fuellings, and delivery and pickup points; licenses, permits, and insurance and registration papers), and the third containing a small black-and-white television set that Lonnie can hook into the cigarette lighter. (Lonnie's map collection is modest compared with that of another driver I met, whose stack is fifteen inches thick and includes such exotica as a map of the Norfolk Naval Air Station and the Chicago viaduct system, with the location and height of each underpass.) Finally came a fourth box, this of road food: a dozen huge slices of homemade pizza (thick crust, rich sauce) in sealed plastic bags, corn chips, ginger snaps, hot sauce, cheese crackers, homemade apple fritters, and apples. Debbi put fresh sheets on the sleeper mattress and covered it with a quilt and pillows before stashing the boxes. On the scale of truck sleepers, Lonnie's ranks as a studio apartment. It is some eight feet wide, forty inches deep, and three feet from bed to ceiling, and opens directly into the cab. It has a dome light, two reading lights, and two ventilation hatches. Various penthouse models, around two and a half times as deep as Lonnie's, have small vestibules, stand-up headroom, fold-out upper bunks, windows, closets, built-in drawers, elaborate temperature and sound-system controls, a shelf for a television set, and truck-ignition buttons. (The ignition buttons are very handy if a driver wants to start the truck without getting out of bed. The time-honored habit of letting a truck idle while a driver sleeps or eats has come under a cloud in recent years. Idling can use up hundreds of dollars' worth of fuel a year. It also shortens an engine's life by promoting carbon buildup and motor-oil breakdown. Drivers generally idle to keep the heater or the air-conditioner running. One practice I heard of was to shut the engine off and then turn it back on when the cold became uncomfortable, leaving it at high idle until the sleeper box warmed up. By the time the sleeper had cooled off again, it was time to wake up. The only time a driver should let a truck idle—except, perhaps, in extreme winter conditions—is a few minutes before heading down the road, and a few minutes after a long run, to let the turbocharger spool down and engine temperatures stabilize.)

Into the cab itself went a flyswatter, which hangs just behind the passenger seat; a small, soft-bristle paintbrush, for dusting off the gauge windows; a bottle of Windex; a roll of paper towels; a back scratcher; a small case filled with tapes (Bob Seger, and sermons recorded by the Reverend Harry Ayers, the Umphletts' pastor at the Christian Life Center); a pair of whisk brooms; a small cardboard box containing aspirin, a large supply of antacids, hand lotion, a hairbrush, a toothbrush, toothpaste, screwdrivers and adjustable wrenches, pens, Murine, and a vial of musk oil for a small Harley-Davidson air-freshener; a plastic, sip-top coffee



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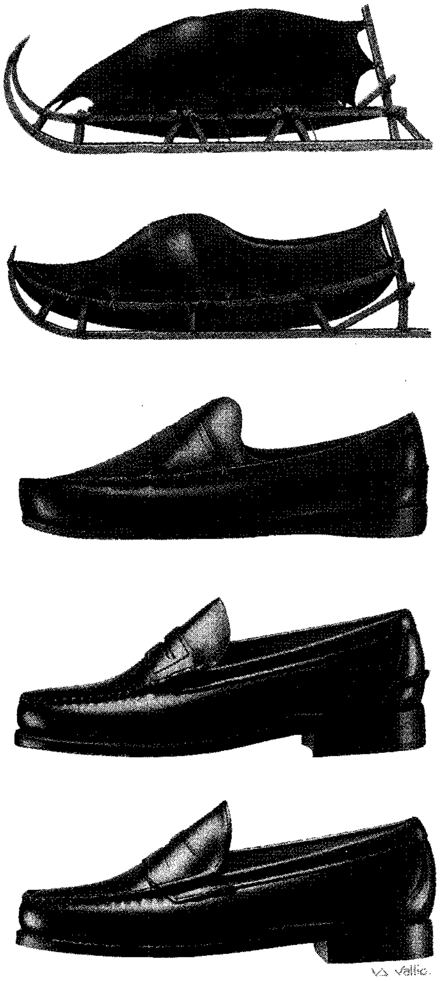

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cup; an unlidded plastic water cup; a large plastic water jug; and a pocket-size booklet of daily meditations. In a small compartment above the passenger-side windshield went Lonnie's current logbook. In a similar compartment above the driver's windshield was some correspondence from Debbi. "For when I get the blues out on the road," Lonnie told me. "There's mushy stuff, silly stuff, and sexy stuff. Those notes are medicine for the ill." One of the envelopes contained a card that read "To my 'Knight of The Road.' Thanks for all those wonderful nights."

Lonnie stowed our two suitcases and my sleeping bag in a small compartment under the sleeper, and checked a compartment opposite to count his supply of nylon straps. He then counted his supply of load-holding chains and chain binders, both of which hung from a vertical aluminum plate directly behind the sleeper—a plate called a "headache rack," because it is there to minimize the damage if a load should shift forward. He moved around the truck one more time, checking the contents of the large aluminum side box under the trailer, where he stows his tarps, and locking it. We were ready to go. He told me to get in the cab, and said he'd be with me in a minute. He and Debbi and the children walked away from the truck to say their goodbyes, while I took my seat in the truck.

To be precise, you don't get into a truck so much as you scale it. The cab's floor is a little over four feet above ground level. To reach the cab, you climb two metal steps, pulling yourself aloft by holding on to any of several handles. It is best to open the door before you attempt this climb, I found out. I had managed, in a matter of not too many seconds, to grab the correct handle with the incorrect hand. The door swung open, and to prevent myself from plunging onto the pavement I instinctively grabbed for an inside handle while I tried to wedge my foot between the metal steps. As Lonnie and his family stood in a small circle, praying for a safe journey, I found myself about to swing out above the distant ground like Harold Lloyd. I had enough sense not to shout for help, and enough presence of mind to realize that if I remained in my position for even a second longer I would rip the door off its hinges and delay Lonnie's launching eastward for hours, or days, and my own launching eastward with Lonnie forever. Finally, I released my hold and landed on the ground, safely but gracelessly. My second ascent was successful, and by the time Lonnie entered the cab I was sitting on the comfortable jump seat, my elbow out the window, my sunglasses and baseball cap in place, to the manner born.

Lonnie was wearing his usual cab attire—one of his collection of Harley-Davidson T-shirts, a long-sleeved flannel shirt, and Levi's. While preparing the truck, he had been wearing high-top tennis shoes. In the cab, he changed them for a pair of corduroy slippers with thin rubber soles. "You get a better feel for the pedals with these than you do with hard soles," he said. "Cowboy boots are the worst." Although the clutch on a truck is extremely stiff, both the brake and the accelerator—wide metal plates—are sensitive. The brake pedal requires a soft, steady touch, since too much pressure may jackknife the truck, or lock the brakes, causing a chatter-stop and leaving regular patches of rubber along the road. The large, hinged accelerator is positively goosey.

Lonnie looked around once again, checking the dashboard gauges, and asked me to adjust the mirror outside my window. He straightened a large greeting card wedged on the dash which pictured a beatific stained-glass Jesus; bowed his head briefly over the steering wheel; brushed back his hair; pushed in a large red button, supplying air to an emergency braking system, and a large yellow button, releasing the tractor and trailer brakes; jiggled the gearshift; pushed his foot against the clutch; pulled the shift lever toward him and down into position; waved goodbye to his family; adjusted his glasses; reached under the side of his seat and raised it by pushing on its air-control knob; and turned to me and said, "Work time."

We made a wide U-turn out of the yard, then crawled along a neglected access road and over a set of railroad tracks before hooking up with Interstate 90. We were crawling because "yard hauls" can be extremely treacherous. The wildly uneven ground, especially if a truck is stretched into a sharp turn, can tip a load in no time, and more abrupt hazards—potholes or railroad tracks, for example—can shear a loaded truck's axles.

Slowly, we picked up speed. We were way up there, and the road was way down there—eight feet down. I felt less on the road than over it, less hugging it than perched above it. The familiar wide swath had become a narrow beam, a monorail. Mile markers swept below me rather than beside me; sedans and station wagons and pickup trucks were no longer just banks of metal and glass encasing disembodied heads. From above, they became revealing sociological units: here were cautious oldsters, with maps, boxes of tissues, and thermos bottles; here were sportsmen, with reels, creels, poles, camp stoves, waders; here were college students off to the new semester, their back seats packed with cardboard boxes, microwaves, stereos, and clothes on hangers; here was a beer can in someone's lap; here was a salesman's car, all sample cases and order books; here were Bermuda shorts and polyester slacks and cutoff jeans; here was a cigarette tapped into an ashtray, a napping schnauzer.

After a few miles, I got used to the feeling that I was sitting in a conning tower (though when we crossed the Clark Fork River and I looked down over the bridge railing my stomach jumped to my throat), and realized that there was a third being along with Lonnie and me—the truck's engine.

Lonnie's engine is a four-hundred-horsepower, eight-hundred-and-fifty-five-cubic-inch, six-cylinder Cummins diesel, which generates a peak torque of about twelve hundred foot-pounds—enough to feel a tractor begin to twist and lift, left to right, during an overly abrupt low-gear acceleration. (By contrast, a large V-8 engine, such as might be found in a Chevrolet pickup truck, is two-hundred-and-thirty horsepower, measures four hundred and fifty-four cubic inches, and generates about three hundred and eighty-five foot-pounds of torque.) The engine is four feet high, five feet long, and two-and-a-half feet wide; it weighs about twenty-five hundred pounds. An oil change requires eleven gallons of lubricant.

The engine cannot be seen from the cab, of course, but it can be heard—a

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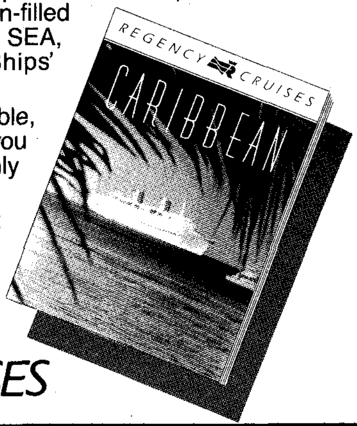

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hundred jungle cats purring in a gruff baritone chorus—and it can be felt, as a jittery subterranean presence nearly but not quite subsumed in the larger palsy that is a truck's ride. This is an uneven, persistent bounce and shake and lurch, the product of sixty-four thousand pounds of trailer and load being pulled by sixteen thousand pounds of tractor and engine over imperfect highways at high speeds, the jolting mitigated only slightly by howitzer-barrel shocks and brick-thick springs.

In an automobile, a sense of speed is based on circumstantial evidence—a signpost, a hitchhiker, a parked car zipping behind you. The source of propulsion—exploding gas and racing pistons and meshing gear teeth—is obscured. Springs and shocks forgive the highway. The engine hums; the turbulence of speed becomes white noise. Hills become long ramps; dips are easy swoops. Not so in a truck. The trailer always seems to be pulling backward or shoving forward—balky or ambitious. Mirrors shake themselves out of position; a magazine or a candy bar or a ballpoint pen on the dash will bounce itself onto the floor; jowls shake; the surface of coffee in a cup is a welter of ripples; maps skitter before the eyes. Things need to be stowed and battened again and again as the voyage on soft-chop seas continues. Lonnie's supply boxes, for example, no matter how securely they were wedged in the sleeper, refused to stay on their side of the bunk, constantly working their way forward and occasionally spilling onto the floorboards of the cab. Lonnie calls them "The Things That Took Over the Freightliner."

An automobile is a time capsule, a means to a destination, a vehicle in a pure sense. Its physical presence is muted, much as a large airplane's is. A sense of actual air travel—turbulence, for instance—is undesirable. Ideally, an airliner has the feel of a waiting room; the focus is arrival, not travel. A truck, on the other hand, encourages a sense of journey. The driver knows he will be moving for, say, several weeks. Destinations are a dime a dozen. One is not necessarily more significant than another.

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unless its gear ratios are radically altered it is incapable of "making time" by sprinting along at seventy-five or eighty miles an hour. Even if that were possible, few drivers would travel at such speeds. Not only would it be extremely dangerous but the wear on the truck and the potential damage to the load would be enormous. Instead, a driver makes time by putting in long hours. So a truck trip is characterized by a sense of accumulation and attrition, of inevitability. Five hundred miles becomes, in due course, four hundred miles. Two hundred miles becomes one hundred miles. Dallas will be reached, and Bismarck, and if we don't get to California this trip we'll hit it on the next. Conversations in a cab become slowed down, sometimes with pauses for thought lasting longer than the utterances themselves—clear to the next town, the next county, the state line. I imagine this was how conversations might have been among cowboys on a cattle drive, or miners holed up in a Yukon cabin for a season, or homesteaders, or soldiers on guard duty at lonely outposts. Psychologically, you are in for the long haul. So there was all the time in the world for Lonnie and me to get to know each other. Plenty of time for us to come to enjoy each other's company (which we did), or to come to loathe each other.

We spoke on and off through the afternoon and into the evening—about the baseball pennant races, the N.F.L., our high-school athletic success, deer (Lonnie's truck has a pair of wind-activated deer whistles; their pitch supposedly deters the animals from running into the truck), armadillos ("They're everywhere in Texas. They roll up in little balls on the highway. Hit one off-center and he shoots out past the shoulder like a big watermelon seed"), recreational vehicles ("They're all over, like beer cans in a river. I just try not to let 'em bother me. But they can be tough. Dad's tired, so he heads back to sleep and Mama drives. O.K., but for twenty years the only road experience she's had is going down to the Rexall in the family Buick"), books, movies, music ("No new-wave music for me. I guess you could say I'm a permanent-wave rock-and-roll fan"), food, weather. We more or less stuck to topics like these throughout our trips together, when we weren't talking shop. The cab of a

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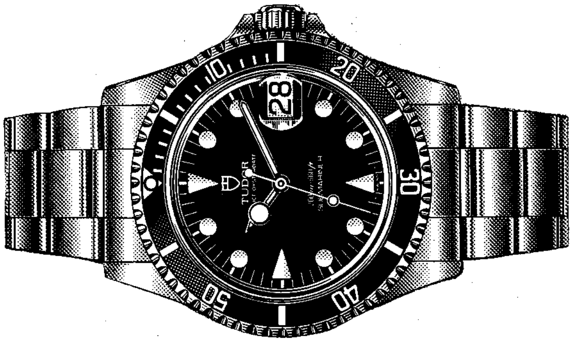

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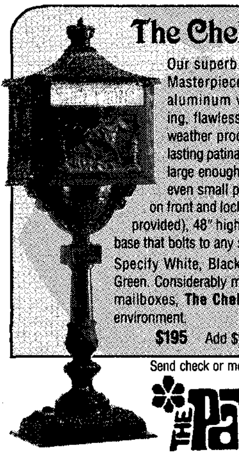
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truck is a small place—certainly too small, I felt, for political discussions between two people with widely divergent views. Lonnie, for example, more than once mentioned that he believes in what he calls fifty-cent justice—the price of a .45 slug between the eyes—for those convicted of crimes against women and children. Nor is he in the forefront of the struggle for racial harmony. ("The fight between blacks and whites has been going on here for three hundred years. I don't want to battle. I am not a radical—no crosses or robes. But if you look up 'maniac' or 'overreact' in the dictionary I guarantee you it'll say 'See Lonnie Umphlett.' So I live in Montana, where there are almost no blacks, because I realize I have this ethnic problem.")

At nine that night, we fuelled in Lockwood, just northeast of Billings, at a small combination truck stop and convenience store. The truck has two fuel tanks, which hold a hundred gallons each, but, with the trailer so heavily loaded and diesel fuel weighing more than seven pounds a gallon, Lonnie put in only seventy-five gallons. I offered to man the nozzle while Lonnie went inside to fill the thermos. It felt good to be helping out, even in a minor way, and as I watched the pump's register fly I thought of myself as part of a small but noble fraternity, whose strength emerged in part from its brothers' unspoken mutual respect and quietly performed tasks. Just then, a grimy truck-and-trailer tanker from New Town, North Dakota, pulled up to the next island. The driver climbed down from the cab and began fuelling. When he looked my way, I smiled and said, "Little windy out tonight," driver to driver. He was a thin man, wearing a windbreaker over a T-shirt, and under the lights I could see that he was tired-looking and unshaven. He stared at me with steely disgust before he turned away.

Standing there holding the cold metal nozzle while hot-tar and diesel fumes swirled around me and rain spat on my face, I felt stung, then sheepish. Three hundred and fifty miles riding shotgun, I realized, didn't begin to qualify me even to "Howdy" some guy standing in the middle of the prairie fuelling his dirty, stinking truck, as he'd probably done a thousand times in his life and would do a thousand times more. America suddenly seemed an unimaginably huge land, which I had hired on to cross the long way. I put the hose back into the pump, screwed on the tank's candy-jar-size cap, and shuffled across the lot toward the cashier's desk, where Lonnie was getting his fuel receipt.

HALF an hour later, we dropped down through a gulch, and Lonnie had to downshift in order to top the opposite grade. "Except for starting up, and—let's see—twice in North Dakota, around Bismarck and Valley City, that's about the last gear I'll have to catch until the Twin."

If you are driving along Interstates 90 and 94 (the route we were following) in a car, in dry conditions, there are only three grades worthy of the name between western Montana and the Ohio-Pennsylvania border—that is, only three steep enough and long enough to require an automobile to downshift in order to roll over them at the speed limit. They are Homestake Pass, over the Continental Divide, east of Butte, Montana; Cardwell Hill, thirty miles east of that; and Bozeman Pass, fifty miles farther on. The same trip in a loaded semi turns these three stretches into extended downshifted crawls. The rest—despite the long shift-free stretch that Lonnie mentioned, and the flatlands of the Midwest—includes scores of lesser climbs and descents, requiring hundreds of gear changes. (There are also non-geographic obstacles. Lonnie once calculated that in the six hundred miles or so between Portage, Wisconsin, and the third exit on the Pennsylvania Turnpike he had to shift a hundred and sixty-two times just approaching and leaving toll booths.)

A truck is an unerring inclinometer, registering all but the slightest deviations from horizontal, many of them imperceptible to the eye. The instant a truck begins to go uphill, its r.p.m.s and speed drop, sometimes dramatically. The dozen or so softly twisting miles of the drive over Homestake, for instance, which are an easy fifteen-minute bottom-to-top-to-bottom ride in a car, take a loaded semi nearly three times that long to negotiate. Depending on the weight of the load and the size of the engine, a driver will have to shift down two to four gears as he climbs. Unlike automobile transmissions, truck transmissions are not synchronized. This means, in theory, that to move from one gear to another a driver must double-clutch—disengage the clutch to move from one gear to neutral, then disengage it again to move from neutral into the desired gear. In fact, however, most experienced drivers—especially when shifting between the higher gears—manage regularly to avoid double-clutching. They do this by ear, noting by the sound of the engine exactly how fast it is turning over and when they can shift smoothly. (I tested Lonnie on this ability, holding my hand over the tachometer as he guessed its values through a complete series of shifts across North Dakota. He hit nineteen out of twenty figures within fifty r.p.m.s.) The shift lever itself is a stout version of a car's floor shift. Toward the top of the pole is a large knob with a pair of controls—one to put the truck in its low range (in Lonnie's truck, with its fifteen-speed transmission, this low range, called "deep under," covers five gears), and the other to split the ten high gears into two five-gear shift patterns.

Ascending a pass like Homestake is a slow, tedious affair; descending one is a slow, tedious, and very dangerous affair. An eighty-thousand-pound vehicle gains momentum very quickly—the same amount of horsepower is needed to restrain a truck going down a grade as to pull it up the grade—and a driver must use a combination of at least two, and more likely three, separate braking systems if he doesn't want to end his descent halfway up a deep-sand runaway-truck ramp or embedded in the side of a mountain. Of the three systems—the engine itself, an engine-retarder system, and the wheel brakes—the last, on a long grade with a loaded truck, is the least effective, and a good driver uses it almost exclusively as an auxiliary. If a driver allows his truck to pick up too much speed down a grade, there is no wheel-braking system in the world that will do anything but quickly become red-hot. The truck will squeeze past the softening grip of the brake shoes like a knife past cooked noodles. As the engine overspeeds, pushing beyond the governor, it will wind itself so tight that it will eventually blow up, punching rods through piston heads. The truck will then free-roll to destruction, its axle grease, then its tires, and possibly the trailer itself in flames, ignited by the overheated brakes. A driver tries to descend a grade in a gear low enough to hold the truck at a constant speed. In Home-

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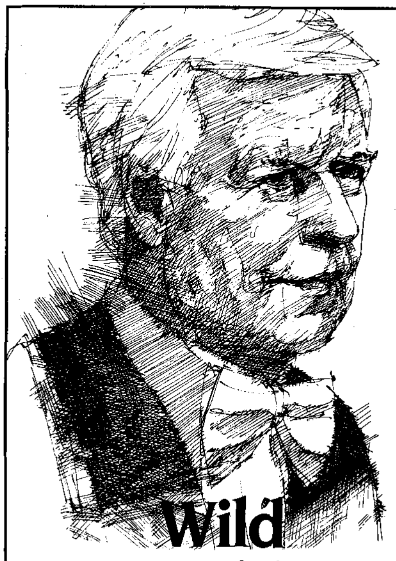

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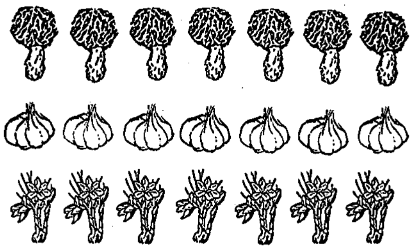

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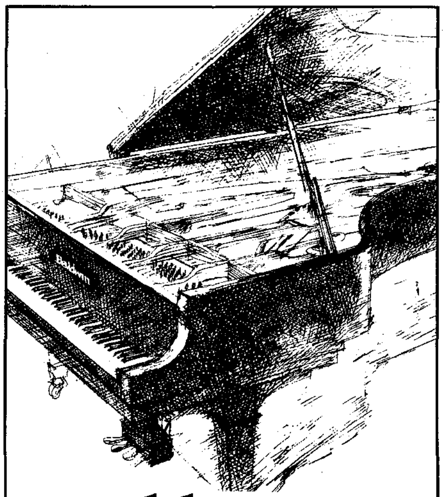
stake's case, Lonnie picked eleventh gear. But without help from the engine retarder, eleventh gear would not have held the truck to twenty-five miles an hour—the recommended descent speed—and Lonnie would have had to gear down much lower.

There are several retarder systems available to a truck: exhaust retarders, which create back pressure in the exhaust system; hydraulic retarders, which force the engine to push against hydraulic fluid; electric retarders, which use electromagnetic coils to cause drag on the driveline or trailer axle; and engine retarders, which, by fiddling with valve timing, turn the engine, in effect, into a large air compressor. The Davis trucks are equipped with an engine retarder—a Jacobs Engine Brake, usually called a Jake Brake. It is controlled by two large toggle switches on the dash. One switch perverts the valve timing of two cylinders, the second switch that of the four others. When a Jake is turned on, the engine erupts in a loud, rude noise—blat blat blat blat—like a very harsh, very powerful foghorn.

On the long downgrade of Homestake, with the transmission holding and the Jake set on all six cylinders, Lonnie needed to use his wheel brakes only about a dozen times; ten of those were light, short adjustments—taps, really—and two were longer, harder squeezes. We had stopped at the top of Homestake to stretch and bump the tires. (Often, if one tire in a set of duals goes flat the other tire will hold it up, so periodic bumping is necessary. A flat that is hit with a hammer sounds the way a water-soaked log might when hit with a hammer.) I asked Lonnie a question that had long bothered me: Why do trucks always seem to stop on the top of passes? He thought about it for a minute, then told me that in the old days engines had to be cooled down after a long uphill pull, but that wasn't necessary now. A summit was as good a place as any to stop, he added, and maybe better, since it was easier on the engine to start the truck off downhill. He guessed that was about it.

As we headed toward Beach, North Dakota, our first night's destination, the moon, nearly full, rose through scattered clouds. Despite the clouds, and a thin, constant rain, it provided enough light to pour a cup of coffee by. My cup was open-mouthed,



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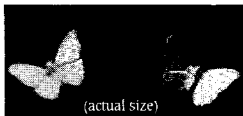

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and although we were on a smooth road the coffee kept splashing on my legs. (I bought a sip-lid cup in Beach.) We chatted, and watched the gently rolling prairie pass, its vacancy interrupted only by an occasional distant ranch-yard light.

"I like this stretch," Lonnie said. "Sometimes, when the moon is up and there's no traffic—and there's never any traffic out here—it can be pretty good driving, and I really enjoy myself. It's not the same as going around the Horn, out there from Milwaukee down through Chicago, where the four-wheelers are buzzing around like mosquitoes."

I asked him if he had ever wanted to get a job with a large "drop and hook" operation, like Consolidated Freightways, which has regular routes and pays better.

"Try me in a couple of weeks. Probably not. I call those guys 'long-way locals,' as opposed to long haulers. They hop in a truck in Butte and drive over to Idaho. Then they pick up another trailer and come back. A long-haul driver has more to do. I have to know different towns, different states, climates, all the tricks. How to get around town, where to get fuel, where the portable scales might be, what the time-zone differences are—the delivery might be in one, the dispatcher in another, and home in a third. I have to figure special conditions beforehand—a road I can't make time on, a road I can, when I'm going to have to push, grab food, eat on the run. You know, just be ready for any darn thing that comes down the road. I have to know how to load coils, or lumber, or PVC pipe, how to tarp 'em all. What if I'm hauling farm equipment? Are my chains tight enough? Where are the radio stations with good disk jockeys? With good local weather? With ballgames?"

I turned on the dome light and studied the map. I-94 made a long loop—north, then south—while I-90 veered south near Billings, and both seemed to go almost directly to Green Bay. Why, I asked him, were we taking I-94?

"Well, in a car you might go on I-90, but not in a truck. We aren't going to visit Mt. Rushmore or the Corn Palace, for example. Then, there's more traffic on 90 through South Dakota, and you always have to factor in stress a little. It's true that if you run on across 212 from Crow

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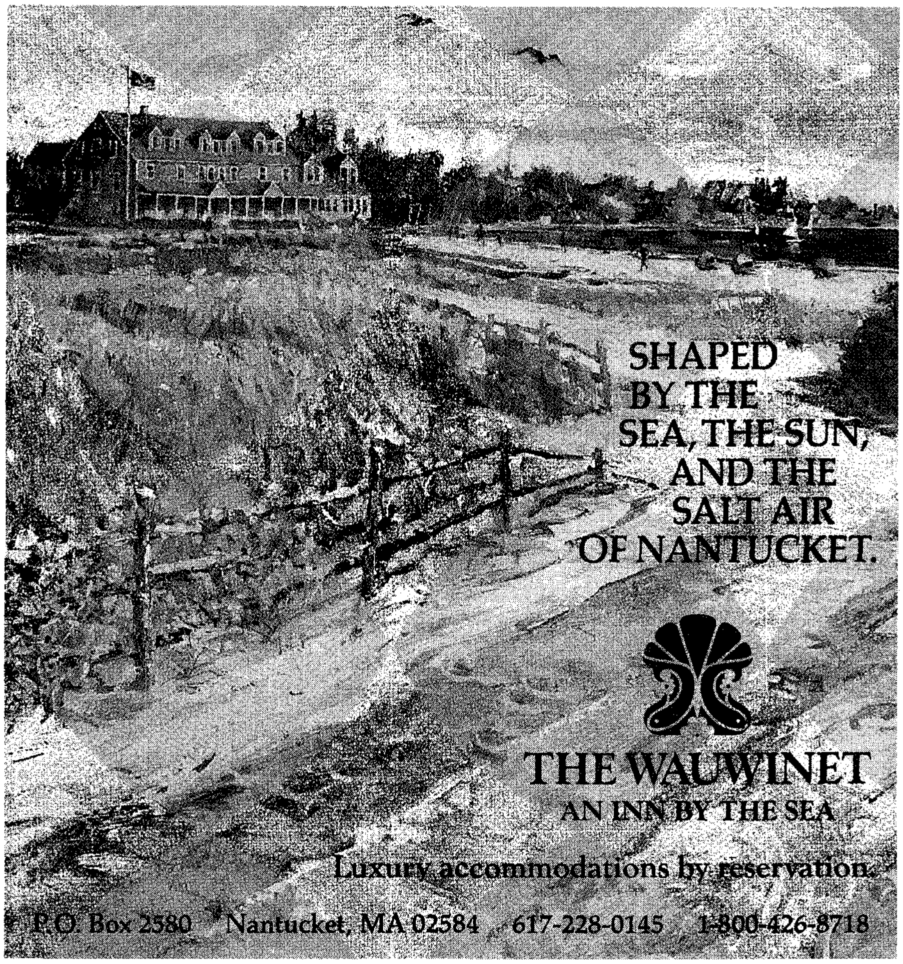

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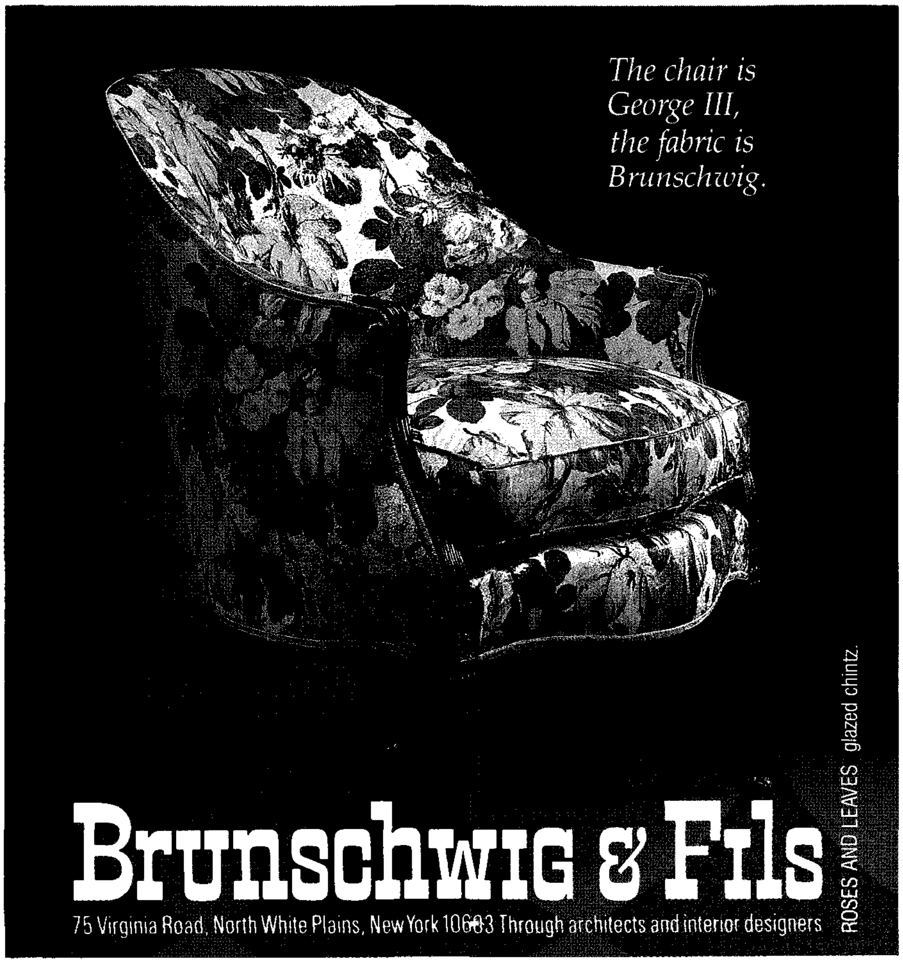

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Agency, south of Hardin, you cut off about an hour, but that's a narrow two-lane, across unfenced grazing land. If you stick to 90, you have the Bighorn Mountains and some long pulls. You have the Crow Agency scale, another one near Sturgis, and the Sheridan Port of Entry, so you can add half an hour or an hour to the same two hundred miles you cover up here. In the winter, this road stays colder, too. When it's really cold, so cold the snow cracks, you can feel the truck grab. It sounds almost like you're riding on sand. You have better traction than you do down on I-90, where the traffic tends to squish snow into a glaze that's no fun. Plus there are some fierce winds in Wyoming. Beach has a weigh station that's always open, but it seems that along the rest of 94 they just leave you alone, let you get on with your job."

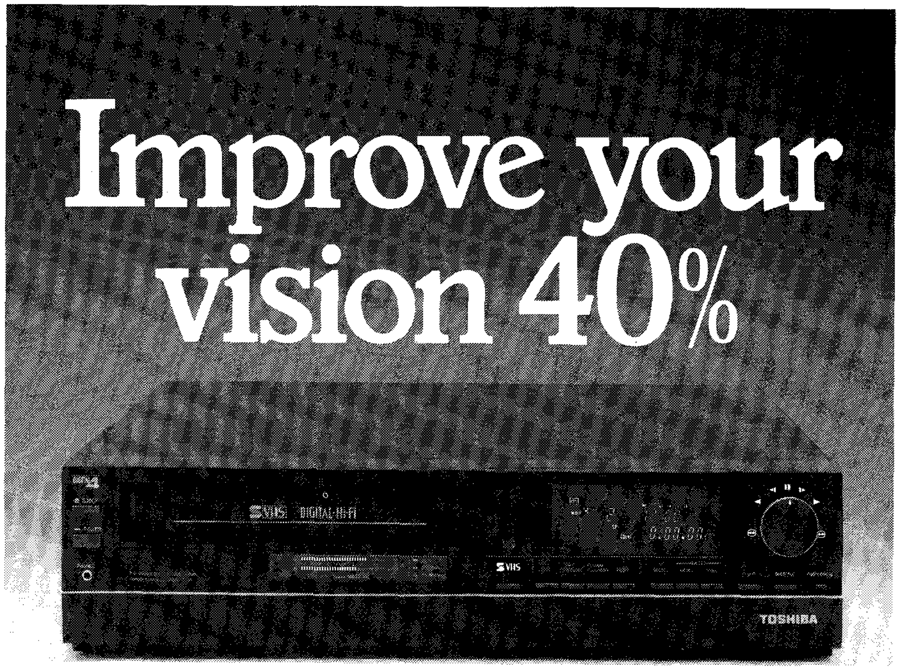
Sandy Psyk, a retired driver who now sells trucks in Missoula, had told me that when he was heading east from Seattle he used to travel off the interstates whenever he could, avoiding the crowded rest areas and the large truck stops, with their undistinguished food and crowded parking lots, and that a cross-country trip on state and U.S. highways would mean, at most, eight added hours of driving time.

"It would make a more interesting trip," Lonnie said, after a while. "But if he's factoring in interstate boredom I have to think a fella would also have to factor in two-lane stress. You come up behind a combine, or a tractor, or Farmer Jones putt-putting along. You might not be able to pass for quite a while. I'm sure the food is better, and it breaks things up going through little towns, but you can't always trust a map. If you come down a hill and that road starts to go squiggle, then you better squiggle real quick or you're in trouble. This is no business to learn the hard way."

We went through the scales at the Beach weigh station, and though we were a few hundred pounds over the eighty-thousand limit nothing was said. Weigh stations, which can be either permanent or portable, are run by state authorities. Their primary job is to check for overweight trucks, but a weighmaster may occasionally ask to check a driver's logbook or license, or a truck's freight bill, operating authority, licenses, or fuel- and road-tax permits (which may appear as decals on a cab door or as a second plate on the front bumper). In addition, a truck can be subjected to a safety inspection at a weigh station, and if it is found to be a hazard it is taken out of service. Drivers rarely skip weigh stations, because the fines for doing so are high and the time involved in most detours for this purpose is considerable.

We fuelled at a truck stop in Beach, and Lonnie backed into a corner of its sloping dirt lot. I had helped him drink two small thermosfuls of coffee since we left Missoula, twelve hours earlier, but I could hardly keep my eyes open. I partly unrolled a tarp under the trailer and crawled into my sleeping bag, using the tarp as both a pillow and a ground cover. My sleepiness vanished temporarily, and for the next hour or so I listened to a country-and-Western station on my headphones while the rain tipped softly against the load above. I counted six trucks as they maneuvered into parking places and set their air brakes with an earth-pushing whoosh. On the highway, dozens more trucks rolled east and west, toward Seattle, Boston, and everywhere in between.

I WAS up early, before Lonnie, and went inside to take a shower. The cashier asked if I had fuelled, and when I said "Last night" she handed me a shower key and a towel with a small bar of soap in it. The procedure differs at truck stops: some require a deposit for the shower key of anywhere from two to ten dollars, even if you have fuelled; others charge a couple of dollars if you haven't fuelled. When I returned to the truck, I was astonished that, in my weariness the night before, I had failed to notice the two trucks parked next to ours. They were flatbeds carrying covered sections of something—from the size, the loads could have been cathedral naves. A jolly driver with several teeth missing, wearing a Rotella Oil baseball cap, emerged from one of the trucks. He told me in a French-Canadian accent that the loads were Boeing 767 fuselage sections going to Seattle from eastern Canada. "This is one hell of a trip," he continued. "We both carry plenty of canvas, but neither of us had straps long enough to go around the loads. They're both seventeen feet high. Then, the company said, 'Don't worry, don't worry, all your permits are paid for,' but we've been paying



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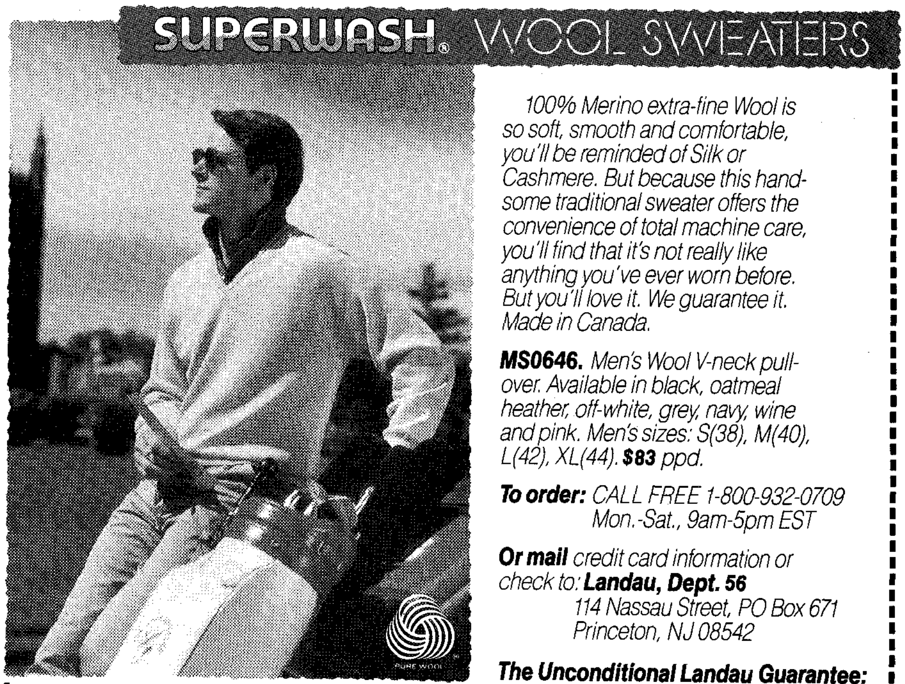

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everyone we see since we started, and there's no bosses to get hold of, because this is a long weekend and they're all on vacation. You can't drive on weekends or holidays with an oversize, so we've been sitting here since Saturday noon."

Lonnie, who had come down from the cab, shook his head in sympathy, then told me that we'd better go eat. As we walked to the café, he said, "I appreciate his problem, but he's stuck here till tomorrow and has all day to tell us his story. We just don't have all day to listen to it."

We ate a quick breakfast in the pleasant café, surrounded by tables of men drinking coffee, talking on tableside phones, or, as Lonnie was doing, filling out logbooks. The coffee was awful, the waitress was friendly. Sixteen hours, eight hundred and twenty-three miles, and many, many grain elevators and recreational vehicles later, Lonnie pulled into a roadside rest area an hour out of Green Bay and shut the truck down for the night.

I don't know whether I expected a brass band to greet us when we pulled into the Weyerhaeuser lumberyard the next morning, but, all in all, after travelling so many miles I did expect more than a bored yard foreman shuffling Lonnie's papers and telling us to go ahead and untarp while he got a forklift, as if we had pulled in from across the street.

Untarping is a dangerous, dirty, strenuous task, even for two people—though it is not as tricky as tarping, which requires hefting the bulky, heavy tarps onto the top of the load. Halfway through the job that morning, I said I found it hard to believe that one person could do this by himself.

"Try it sometime when it's fifteen below zero and the tarps are as stiff as plywood, with a thirty-mile wind blowing," Lonnie said. "I've spent many a hard hour at it."

We worked quickly, circling the truck, unhooking about three dozen two-foot-long rubber straps that held the tarps to the trailer and stowing them between two underbelly trailer struts. We loosened a half-dozen thick nylon straps that wound around outside the tarps, and then, with Lonnie on top of the load, we pulled and pushed each of three tarps off to the side and loosened another half-dozen nylon straps before the forklift arrived. While its long tines lifted the lumber off the

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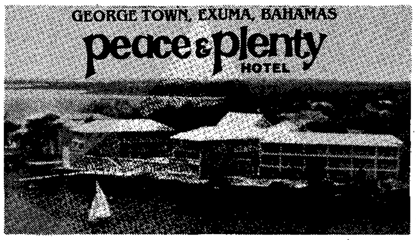

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trailer, we became circus roustabouts, folding and rolling the tarps into cylinders the size of small water heaters and stowing them in the aluminum side box. We were sweating and grimy and panting at the end of our task. Lonnie and the foreman counted the bundles of cedar and checked them against the invoice. The numbers jibed, papers were signed, the foreman tore the multiple copies apart, handed one to Lonnie, said "This is yours," folded one into his breast pocket, said "This is mine. Thanks," and walked away.

Lonnie followed him into the office to call the dispatcher at Davis, and returned in a few minutes to say that there was a load of panelling in Oshkosh, fifty miles down the road—the freight that we would take to Lodi, New Jersey. —BRYAN DI SALVATORE

(*This is the first part of a two-part article.*)

•

THERE'LL ALWAYS BE AN ENGLAND, WITH OR WITHOUT HONG KONG

[*Letter to the editor of the Hong Kong South China Morning Post*]

My father, Wan Shui, and his father before him, Wan Yuk-shing, served in the merchant navy as cooks with the Shell Co. In 1940, my grandfather, Wan Yuk-shing was sailing in a ship which was destroyed by a torpedo.

Finding himself in Liverpool without a ship, he shipped out as second cook and baker in a white crew ship. The captain, Mr Knox (my grandfather tells me that everyone called him "Opportunity"), liked to eat "Board of Trade treacle duff" and taught my grandfather how to make it. My grandfather was taught always to use Tate and Lyle's tinned golden syrup.

Eventually, in 1946, my grandfather returned to Hongkong and taught my father how to make treacle duff. For many years my father and his father worked in the Shell ships and made treacle duff for the officers.

One year, my grandfather being home from the sea, made treacle duff for our family at Lunar New Year. Soon, we were the only family in Tai Kok Tsui, for that is our former home, that served treacle duff at Lunar New Year.

About one month ago, my father travelled to the Wellcome supermarket on The Peak to buy a tin of golden syrup but to his shock and dismay found that it was sold in a bottle.

The staff were quite unable to assure my father as to whether the treacle in the bottle was the same as the treacle in the tin. My father refused to buy the bottle.

What I now ask is for the Wellcome Co to say whether the treacle is the same and I would also like to ask the Shell Co if they allow their cooks to make Board of Trade treacle duff with bottled treacle.

MISS WAN FUNG-LIN
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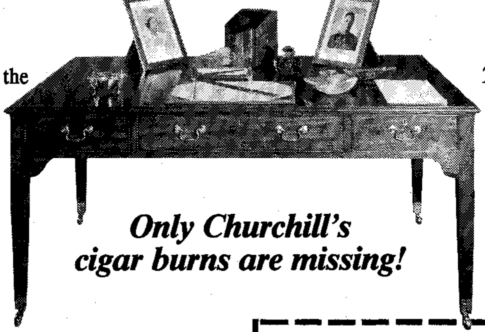

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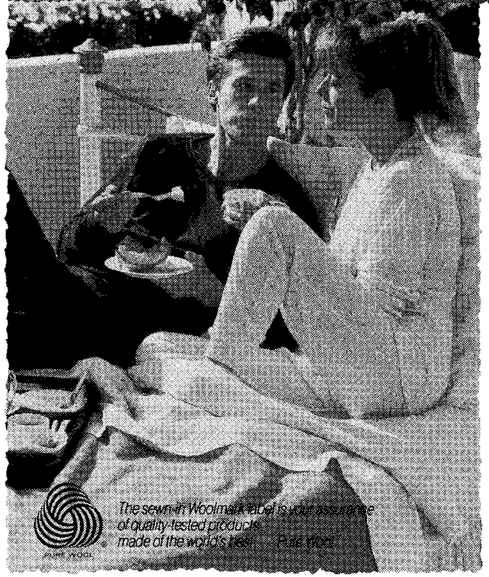
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IN FASHION

"Modesty, What Elegance!"

"DEUX *siècles après la révolution*," proclaimed the cover of a recent issue of *Le Nouvel Observateur*, "*le pouvoir des aristos dans les affaires et la politique*"—all this superimposed on a picture of Inès de La Fressange, the blue-blooded fashion model for the house of Chanel. Devout as the French may be about the events of 1789, aristocrats evidently still fascinate the public and wield considerable influence, in politics and business, and beyond. In France, as elsewhere these days, the upper class is where it's at.

In this climate, you would think that the haute couture would be thriving. Radical chic is behind us—the days when fashion was coined in the street and designers rushed to adopt it, when women felt some compunction about spending as much money on a dress as on a car, when Yves Saint Laurent rallied to the call of ready-to-wear, and refused to design a couture collection, on the ground that haute couture no longer pertained to the way women lived. Now we are in the throes of what *Le Nouvel Obs* calls "*la vogue aristo*," and the couture, having regained its stature, is once again in full swing. The threat that the populist sentiments of the sixties and early seventies posed has been laid to rest, but the questions they raised, still unanswered, hover like a cloud over the heads of the eight hundred or so spectators—clients, celebrities, department-store executives, members of the press—who for nearly a week in the dead of summer in Paris perch on gilt chairs with tufted red velvet seats, in airless hotel ballrooms, and, fanning themselves with their programs, watch the haute-couture parade pass by. This season, the only breeze came at Hanae Mori, when three models wearing gigantic silk-screened caftans stretched their arms out to the side and twirled, like dervishes, in place.

I find it impossible to sit and watch these shows without asking myself a lot of questions—about the haute couture's reason for being, about its place in the world today. With the couture imitating the informality of ready-to-wear in the day clothes, and the ready-to-wear getting more and more extravagant for evening, what is the difference between them? Is haute couture something more than high-quality ready-to-wear made to order? Should it be?

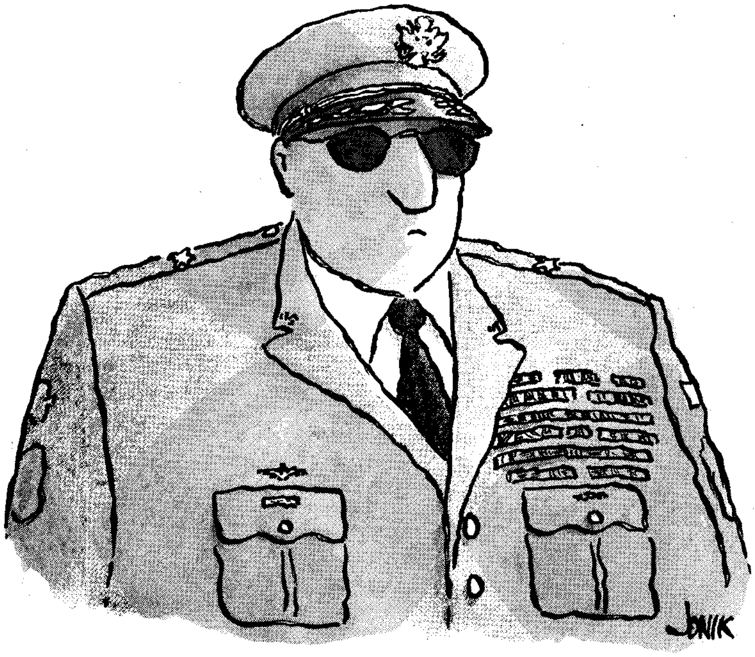
Back when being in fashion meant being up-to-the-minute, couture customers had an edge on everyone else: the ready-to-wear is shown roughly six months in advance, the couture two months in advance of the season. New ideas unveiled in the fall couture collections didn't make their way into the ready-to-wear until the following spring. For the price of a couture dress, a woman was guaranteed that she would be ahead of the crowd; one season later, the world would follow. But now that fashion isn't so conformist, what are the advantages of ordering from the couture?

Is the couture really a "laboratory," as it has often been called, in which designers can perform experiments and further their research in the science of dressmaking, free from the constraints of mass production and the marketplace—and, if not, then what purpose does it serve?

It's the Chambre Syndicale, the organization that acts as host for the shows of both the haute couture and the ready-to-wear in Paris, that designates the houses that qualify as couture, and these designations are based on criteria that are quantifiable: a house must present at least two shows a year for the press and at least forty-five for clients, must show at least seventy-five outfits in each press show, and must employ at least twenty people in its atelier. As a business, the haute couture is now reasonably healthy. Even so, the profit margin ranges anywhere from slim to nil. Most designers use proceeds from their ready-to-wear to subsidize their haute couture for the sake of their image.

Unfortunately, not even better business can solve the haute couture's real dilemma, which is existential, not financial. Judging by the looks of the clothes, some designers are doing their best to come to terms with it, some have chosen to ignore it completely (perhaps in the hope that it will go away), and others apparently haven't given it a thought.

As the ready-to-wear has grown more complicated, more expensive and luxurious, the couture has got simpler and more casual, until it seems as if the difference between them is a matter of degree. These haute-couture clothes, with their impeccable workmanship, gorgeous fabrics, perfect fit, now strike us as glorified versions of the clothes that are currently fashionable—nearly all of which are ready-to-wear—whereas in the



BRIG. GEN. MATT GANDHI
(NO RELATION)

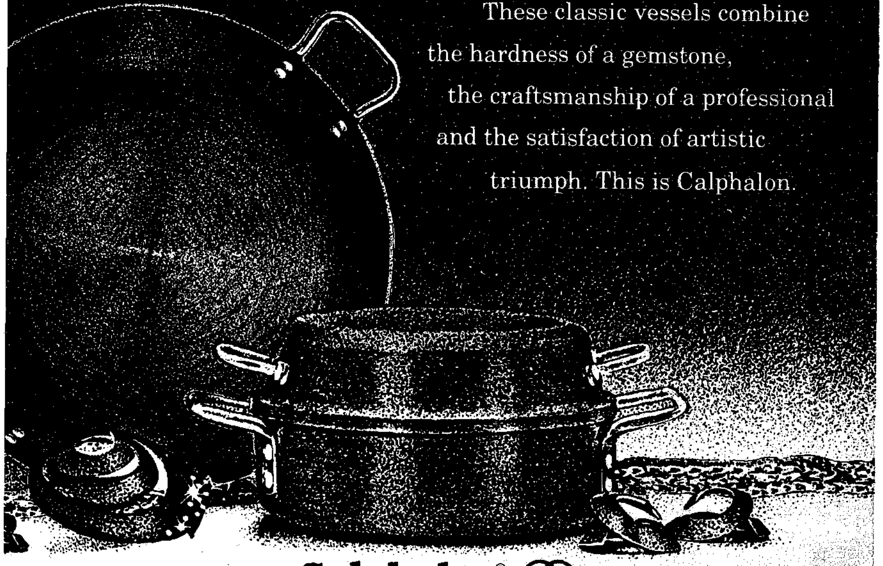
past the ready-to-wear seemed like cut-rate copies of the fashionable couture. Per Spook, for one, though he calls his collection haute couture, designs what would otherwise be known as sportswear—voluminous skirts, blouses smocked at the yoke, nothing so complicated that it couldn't be fitted by a good alterations department.

But for the most part, it seems that couturiers are scrambling to create clothes as expensive-looking as they are expensive. This leads to gratuitous opulence, which is, in fact, quite commonplace in the haute couture. The moral is: Money doesn't buy good taste. It's astounding to think that a woman can spend ten thousand dollars on a dress and *still* look bad.

With ready-to-wear prices high enough as it is (up to three thousand dollars for a Chanel suit off the rack this fall), what does a woman who goes to the extra expense of buying from the couture (eleven to sixteen thousand dollars for a Chanel suit to order) get for her money? At Nina Ricci, she gets a lot of egregious fur trim—fur cuffs on a pair of narrow hounds-tooth-check wool pants, for one example. At Louis Féraud, she gets splendid silk prints. This season's collection was among Féraud's best, with playing cards, dominoes, dice, chess, and checkers for a theme.

Elsewhere—at Pierre Cardin, at Givenchy, at Christian Lacroix—she buys into a certain nostalgia for the good old prelapsarian days, when the haute couture was the very pinnacle of fashion. At Cardin, the good old days have overtones of the sixties, when the designer was in his prime—one dress, in tiers with big hoops inserted into the hem of each, reminded me of how hard it was, way back then, to keep three Hula Hoops going at the same time. People who phone the house of Givenchy and are put on hold hear "Moon River," the theme song from "Breakfast at Tiffany's," playing—a subtle reminder, in case you'd forgotten, that you have reached the house of the man who designed the costumes for Audrey Hepburn's legendary performance as Holly Golightly. At Lacroix, the customer gets a sort of madcap frivolity that reflects his fantasy of what the couture must have been like in its heyday.

At Lanvin, where Maryll Lanvin presented a "Renaissance" collection, the intricacies of construction were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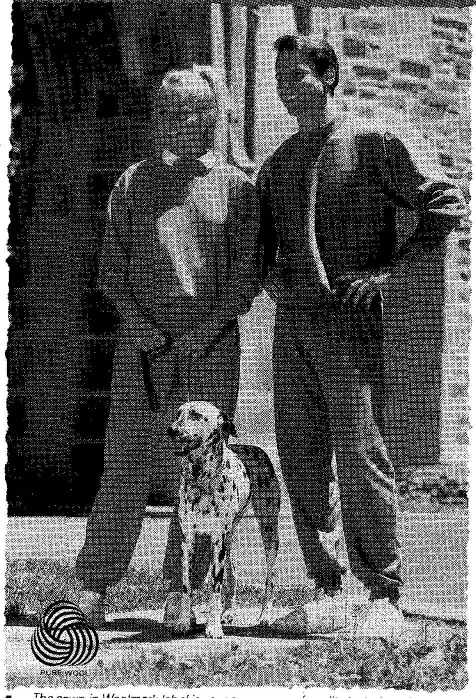
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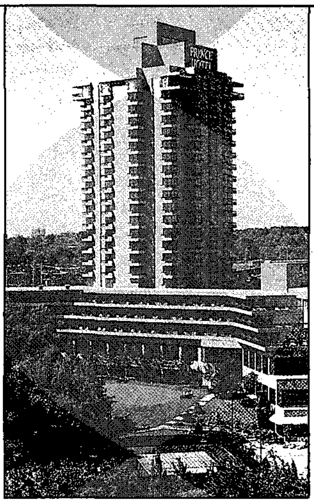

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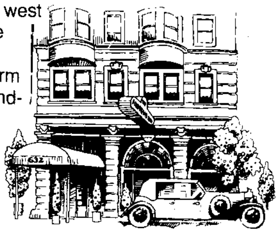

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staggering—insets, gores, tubular "organ-pipe" pleats, and mink ruffs and peplums—even when the impact of the clothes themselves was slight. Alas, the ideas rarely justified the workmanship that went into executing them. At Lanvin, the essence of haute couture this season resided in the workmanship and in a certain esoteric appeal, a taste too rarefied for the average shopper.

It's at Emanuel Ungaro that the couture customer really gets her money's worth. Unable to leave well enough alone, Ungaro complicates everything, in a relentless effort to make each and every item special. To skirts with a scallop slit he adds a bow at the top of the slit. To a perfectly good dress cut low in the back he adds a flounce, like a peplum, at the top of the hip. To a straight skirt that would otherwise be fairly standard, if a little snug, he adds a flared black velvet inset at the center in the back. For all their detail, these clothes are utterly lacking in subtlety. The draping every which way (around the seat, at one side of the waist, from the shoulders), the second-skin fit, the accumulation of coquettish details, all vying for attention, convey a rococo sexuality that seems hopelessly quaint. Watching Ungaro's shows lately, I haven't been sure whether he's changed or I've changed, or both; as recently as a few years ago, I admired his mastery of cut, his ability to mix different textures and prints, and the womanliness his clothes implied. What strikes me now about his work is its peculiarity, its rigid insistence on itself. Ungaro is still a master of the form, but at times it takes a practiced eye to see past all the clutter and appreciate what he has done. His clothes inspire in me the urge to strip them of their trimmings, the way Sophia Loren, in "Houseboat," tears the flowers off the perfectly hideous dress that her rival for Cary Grant's affections has chosen for her to wear to a party at the country club—*et voilà!* Underneath all the floribunda is a ravishingly chic, simple gold lamé sheath.

Not everything the haute couture has to offer is so florid. Rallying to join in the new backlash against frippery, several designers presented evening gowns that were outrageously sober. Drab is in. Think dingy. The new color for evening—everywhere—is brown: brown chiffon, brown changeable taffeta, brown lace, brown satin. This groundswell reached a peak in a group of satin gowns at Carven in shades of khaki green, brown, and gray.

There's a game I play whenever I'm bored at a show, when the clothes are consistently lacklustre, or worse: "If you *had* to pick one thing here," I say to myself, "what would it be?" No matter how ill-conceived the collection, I find, there is—at the very least—one good outfit in it. At Givenchy, it was the black satin cocktail dress, a V-necked wrap with black satin bows at the shoulders and at each side of the waist. At Ted Lapidus, it was a gray-and-soft-pink wool suit with a cape-back jacket and a straight skirt. At Guy Laroche, it was a fox-bordered brown broadtail cape over a brown guipure bolero and a strapless brown guipure-and-satin dress. At Pierre Balmain—well, every rule has its exception.

Balmain is, to my mind, the very nadir of the haute couture these days. (The collection is now designed by Erik Mortensen, who took over the house at the founder's death, six years ago.) The clothes Balmain presented for last fall have gone down in memory as some of the ghastliest of all time: an entire collection based on a single bad idea—black velvet Bermuda shorts. This season, there was no such obsession, but there was an appalling new shape for a skirt, which I can only describe this way: picture a model looking as if she's wearing a tire around her hips, underneath a full skirt.

It wasn't until the week was almost over that the questions were finally answered, with a collection from Yves Saint Laurent that reasserted his genius. After several seasons of turning out clothes that looked as if he himself weren't much interested in them, he suddenly seemed to have recovered his passion for his craft. Saint Laurent stands smack in the middle of the grand couture tradition, bearing the torch passed down to him, from Worth to Vionnet and then to Balenciaga—designers whose compelling interest in the art and science of dressmaking helped to move fashion forward. In this collection, so disciplined and simple, Saint Laurent gave us an object lesson in the haute couture.

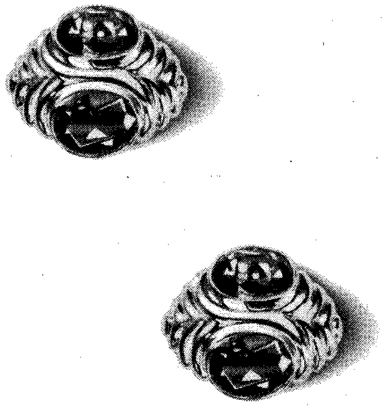
This is what it's about, he seemed to be saying. *This* is why this institution should continue. For all their economy of means, the clothes left no doubt that they qualified as haute couture: succinct and precise, they absolutely had to be fitted on the body of the woman who would wear them. There were a hundred and thirty-four outfits on the program; I starred nearly every one from No. 59 on.

By that time, we were well into dinner suits and cocktail dresses. The day wear, though sleeker and even more concise than usual, looked somewhat familiar and even a little dated—primarily, I think, because Saint Laurent persisted in using broad, padded shoulders. When a coat was worn over a jacket, both of them padded, the shoulders formed a wide, formidable shelf.

It was when he sent out his latest versions of *le smoking* that it became clear just how fine this collection was: there were dresses, suits with a low décolletage, pants, gowns—this time, softer around the edges, lacking the androgynous quality that had characterized Saint Laurent's forays into black-tie menswear in the seventies.

The dresses for evening were lovely: in chiffon, with a wide neckline, draped from the shoulders in the back, or with the bodice draped and tucked into a boat neckline; in satin, with the bodice crossed in back or draped on the diagonal in front. Where Ungaro's hand-pleated dresses, for which he has lately become so famous, are fastidiously nipped and tucked into place, contoured on the body, Saint Laurent's draped dresses are fluid and seductive, the fabric moving in harmony with the body, two or three soft pleats at the shoulder supplying the necessary fullness for the breasts.

The best thing about Saint Laurent's collection was that the strongest pieces were the simplest. Saint Laurent is a master of the sublime. After all the fur trim, the sequins and beading, the overkill that had begun to seem standard for the haute couture, Saint Laurent's clothes radiated a serenity that put to shame most of what had gone before. I am not easily moved by clothes, but at some point, about three-quarters of the way through Saint Laurent's collection, I suddenly realized that I had tears in my eyes. After what looked to some like the start of a long downhill slide, with *Women's*



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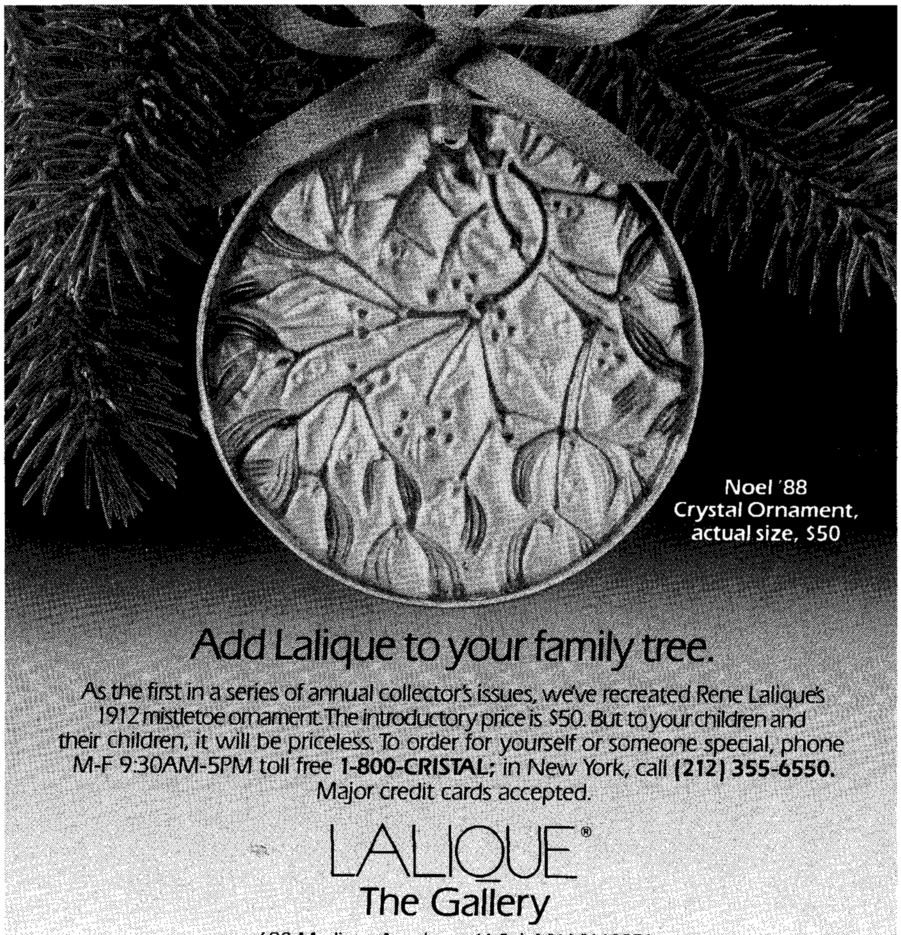

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Wear Daily touting Lacroix and other designers and omitting Saint Laurent completely, with Saint Laurent Rive Gauche boutiques closing down all over the country (three years ago there were some twenty-four; at the start of the year, there were eight), he had not simply made a comeback—he had triumphed. At the finale, as the bride made her way down the runway, the audience rose to its feet and cheered.

There is, of course, no law that says that every single outfit in the couture has to be extraordinary, and designers like Jean-Paul Gaultier, Giorgio Armani, and Geoffrey Beene have proved conclusively that ready-to-wear can be every bit as inventive as haute couture. But when I think of the quintessential haute-couture outfit, I think of Mme. Grès's neoclassical jersey dresses, pleated and draped softly over the body, like the chiton worn by an ancient Greek statue. The lack of a Grès collection this season was conspicuous and lamentable. Her couture and accessories businesses were sold, and then resold. The atelier on the Rue de la Paix has been closed since January. Mme. Grès, now almost ninety, has filed two lawsuits contesting the original sale, and in the meantime fashion is the worse for her absence.

Throughout the collections, the cross-references were flying. Depending on whether you choose to interpret them as one designer borrowing another's good ideas or one designer paying tribute to another, the haute couture is either an artistically bankrupt institution or a mutual-admiration society. Or maybe neither: it seemed to me that the designers who cited the work of other designers were for the most part invoking the names of the saints, trying to discover some important truth by following in their footsteps, retracing the lines of the clothes they designed. At Givenchy, where the suits and the evening gowns were in off-key color combinations (burgundy, kelly green, and fuchsia), irritatingly sharp instead of flat, one thought of Yves Saint Laurent and his perfect pitch. At Per Spook, where a bolero vest and jacket were embroidered in a Provençal print, one thought of Lacroix, who had used Provençal prints in his first couture collection, a year ago. And everywhere one thought of Chanel: at Chanel itself (those of us who subscribe to her style know better than to take Karl Lagerfeld's fidelity for granted); at Lacroix, where a red suit looked like the real thing; at Patrick Kelly, where the updated versions are truly hip, as opposed to Lagerfeld's, which often try too hard; and, time and again, at Saint Laurent. There, apart from the accessories—a jewelled cross hanging from a belt at the waist, gold camellias (Chanel's favorite flower and one of her motifs) as buttons on a suit—the references weren't quite so literal. The suits were lean, cut along lines that were recognizably his, not hers: the jackets elongated and sleek, emphasizing the waist; the skirts wrapped. But the entire collection, day and evening alike, was true to Chanel in spirit, to her ideas and her aesthetic.

As her life has become the subject of movies and Broadway musicals, and as her style has weathered the test of decades, Chanel has gone down in fashion history as a sort of cross between Dorothy Parker and Confucius. Watching Saint Laurent's show, I kept thinking of one of her aphorisms, the wisdom of which was magnificently demonstrated by his clothes: "Adornment, what a science! Beauty, what a weapon! Modesty, what elegance!"

—HOLLY BRUBACH

•

A DISTANT TRUMPET

Borne along humid winglets,
air for some reason from
a New Jersey source,
western to the West Side
on a veritable breeze
cogitating zephyrs.

Actually, it's the solo lead at
an outdoor jazz fest; early
noon at Lincoln Center
Plaza. High, offbeat
melancholy wafted;
not autumn but verging.

And a cool perpetuation of rich,
gold, and mellow. A musical
grasp on the stops like
Louis Armstrong, so classy
you can't figure how you can
even hear it at seven

blocks away. Tantalizingly un-
amplified. Improvised, we listen
to that single distant trumpet,
and for the rest of the day,
feel no pain. Riff
in the magnet skies.

—JANE MAYHALL

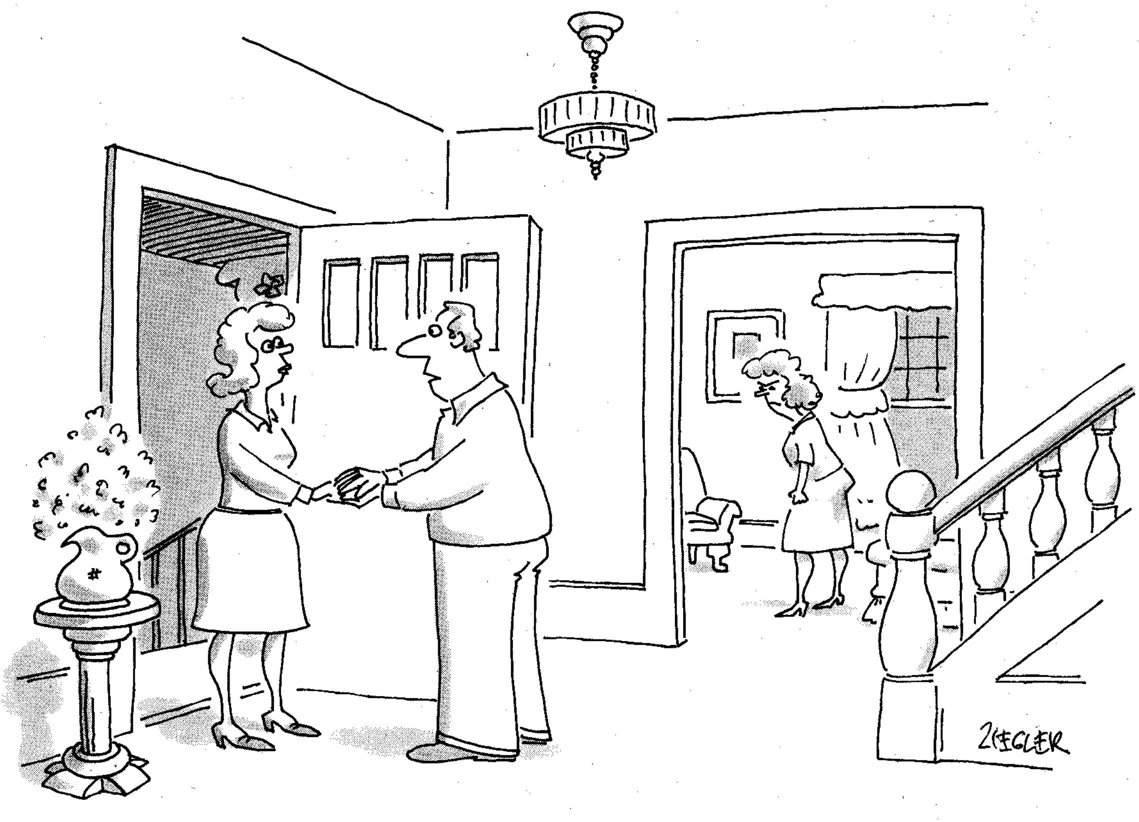
ANNALS OF MEDICINE

THE FOULEST AND NASTIEST CREATURES THAT BE

I SAW my first tick in the back yard of a rented house in East Hampton, on the oceanic East End of Long Island, one afternoon in July of 1949. It was on my wife's back. We had just come home from the beach, and the tick was conspicuously poised on the bare skin between the top and the bottom of her two-piece bathing suit. We had only recently moved east from Missouri, where the insect pest of summer is not the tick but the chigger. Still, I knew what a tick looked like, and I knew—or had heard—that there was an approved way of removing one from the flesh of its victim: apply the lighted end of a cigarette. I had a cigarette in my hand (as I often did in those innocent days), and I carefully applied the lighted end to my wife's nicely tanned back. She gave a scream. The tick did not, as the approved method promised, drop to the ground. It merely crawled a millimetre or two to the right. Instinct guided me next. I reached out and plucked it off with my thumb and forefinger. Before I killed it, before I crushed it with a pebble, I took a closer look. It was almost the size of a ladybug, only flat, with a shiny brown carapace and a yellowish cape-like collar. It had eight spindly legs and a tiny snout of a head. It was ugly, but it looked—though I knew it wasn't—harmless. That, as I say, was my first tick, but hardly my last. I have since seen hundreds, perhaps thousands, in the wild and—crawling, sitting, or embedded—on me, on my wife, on my son, and on several generations of dogs.

THE tick is not, to be puristic, an insect. It belongs, in the nomenclature of science, to the phylum Arthropoda and is a member (along with spiders, scorpions, mites, and the horseshoe crab) of the class Arachnida. Ticks are found in incomprehensible numbers throughout the world, and man has probably been unpleasantly aware of them since his beginnings. Human detestation of the tick easily surpasses that aroused by snakes and spiders. "Ill-favored ticks," Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.) cried out in his "Natural History." "The foulest and nastiest creatures that be." I know of no better confirmation of the theory of evolution than the tick. That is to say, it is hard to think of the tick, which lives on the blood of other creatures but is itself food for none, as a deliberate creation, as one of the creatures in Genesis "that creepeth upon the earth," and to believe that it had a Creator who "saw that it was good." My first tick—and, with one considerable exception, all of the many ticks I have seen—was of the species *Dermacentor variabilis*, the dog tick. It is, like all ticks, parasitic, but is itself often host to the bacterium *Rickettsia rickettsii*, the agent of Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Rocky Mountain spotted fever takes its name from the region (the mountains of Idaho and Montana) in which, in the eighteen-nineties, it was first identified, but it is no longer seen as merely a provincial menace. Its geography is now known to embrace most of the Western Hemisphere. It has, however, its favored haunts. These include, along with the mountain West, much of the states of Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, coastal Connecticut and Massachusetts, and eastern Long Island.

Rocky Mountain spotted fever is a dangerous disease. The average incubation period—the interval between the bite and leisurely blood meal of an infected tick and the appearance of illness—is about seven days. The onset is often abrupt, with high fever, chills, headache, prostration, and other more or less equivocal manifestations. The characteristic spotted rash seldom appears before about the fourth day. Immediate diagnosis is consequently difficult unless the disease is suspected—unless the diagnostician is morbidly

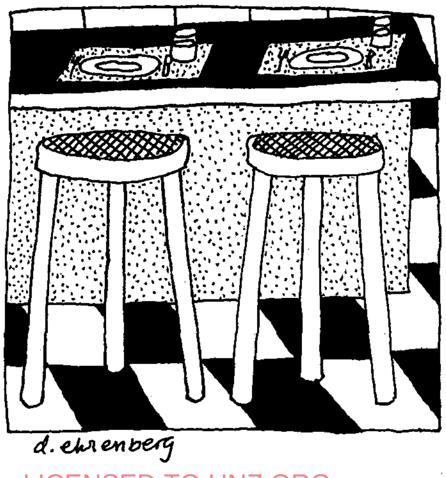


"Janet, we have to stop meeting like this. It has become a source of increasing friction in my marriage to Elizabeth."

alert to its possible presence or unless the victim can inform him of a recent tick bite. This last is only sometimes feasible. Ticks seem to seek out secluded feeding sites—the armpit, the scalp, the navel. An effective treatment for Rocky Mountain spotted fever, involving a tetracycline antibiotic, has been available since the middle nineteen-fifties. Untreated or improperly treated cases have a high mortality—around twenty per cent. I was aware of Rocky Mountain spotted fever at the time of my introduction to *D. variabilis*, and I made it my business to learn more. I learned from local lore that the vector tick is ubiquitous in range, finding a comfortable habitat in fields and pastures, in brush and woods, in the grassy dunes that border the most pleasant beaches, and even in the best-kept lawns, and that its preferred hosts are rabbits, mice, squirrels, and dogs. Man is merely *faute de mieux*. I learned from a local doctor that there was no effective treatment for Rocky Mountain spotted fever (the tetracyclines were yet to come), but that there was a vaccine. My wife and son and I presented ourselves at the local clinic and were immunized. I have a vivid recollection of that vaccination: a moment after the injection, my arm received what felt like a blow from a baseball bat, and an ache that persisted for some hours. But it seemed well worth that little discomfort. I lived the next thirty-odd years—sunning myself on beachy dunes, strolling in brushy pastures, cutting firewood—in the carefree knowledge that my wife and son and I were immune to Rocky Mountain fever, and I removed any ticks I attracted as nothing more than nuisances. It was only recently that I learned that all *R. rickettsii* vaccines had long since been found to be unreliable and had been withdrawn from the market.

I understand now, having made some inquiries, how I happened to escape contracting Rocky Mountain spotted fever in spite of my unconcerned wanderings for so many years in an area in which the disease is historically endemic. It was, of course, in large part luck. But the odds were very much in my favor. It is estimated that even in heavily infested areas only about five per cent of the vector ticks are carriers, and it is a comforting fact that the dog tick (and its carrier cousins) is an indecisive feeder. It usually crawls around the skin of a human host for some little time before it chooses a place to eat. During those preliminary perambulations, it presents no kind of threat, and even when it settles down and thrusts its proboscis into the skin the migration of the *R. rickettsii* bacterium to its new host seems to take time—perhaps several hours. The moment for concern is at hand when the tick is not only attached but visibly enlarged, engorged. A well-fed dog tick is only too repellent a warning. I have never found an engorged tick on myself or on my wife or son, but I have removed any number from our dogs. They have varied in size, but the most gluttonous feeders have been about as big as a grape, and of a sickly leaden color.

I WAS, as it turned out, far luckier than I knew in those years of imagined immunity. I may have been to some extent protected against Rocky Mountain spotted fever, at least in the earlier years, but its carrier is not the only toxic tick that finds a congenial home on eastern Long Island, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever is not the only tick-borne disease that is endemic in my neighborhood. This other tick is called *Ixodes dammini*, and it is host to the agents of two newly noted but otherwise entirely distinct diseases. A malaria-like disease called babesiosis is one of these. Babesiosis takes its name from that of the causative organism, a protozoan named *Babesia microti*, which, in turn, takes its name from that of its discoverer, the Rumanian bacteriologist Victor Babes. It is, in general, a relatively mild disease, and its victims usually recover without chemotherapeutic assistance, but it has a grave potential. Victims whose spleens have been removed or damaged, the elderly, and cirrhotic alcoholics are always at risk, and sometimes die. *B. microti* turns up as a tenant of *I. dammini* a little more often than *R. rickettsii* does of *D. variabilis*.

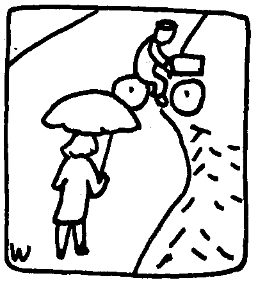


The other disease that *I. dammini* may harbor is Lyme disease. Lyme disease is rarely fatal, but unless it is promptly diagnosed and appropriately treated its victims may recover from its acute assault only to give way later to a variety of debilitating chronic ills. I have encountered *I. dammini* only once, a couple of years ago, and, like my first tick, it was attracted to my wife. She found it settled on, but fortunately not attached to, her thigh after a walk in a weedy pasture. She lifted it off and showed it to me in the palm of her hand. It was a tiny thing. *I. dammini* is commonly described as about the size and shape and color of a poppy seed. That, to me, is an exaggeration. My—or my wife's—tick was about the size and shape and color of the period that ends this sentence. My wife supposed at first that it was a little scab or freckle. But it moved, and under a magnifying glass its eight arachnid legs were just visible. We twisted it up in a Kleenex and, on a hunch, took it the next day to a dermatologist in the neighboring village of Southampton—Bernard W. Berger, whom we knew to be an authority on Lyme disease and an active investigator into its nature. Dr. Berger gave it a glance, and identified it not only as *I. dammini* but also as an *I. dammini* nymph. It is primarily in the nymph, or middle, phase of its life cycle that *I. dammini* transmits Lyme disease to humans. It was well, as I say, that our tick had not yet attached itself: at least sixty per cent of *I. dammini* on eastern Long Island, Dr. Berger told us, are carriers of Lyme disease. That was bad enough. But I learned only the other day that ticks infested with the Lyme-disease organism can also be infested with the organism of babesiosis.

The coincidence of the organisms of Lyme disease and babesiosis in a single obliging tick was first reported in 1983, in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, by a pediatrician named Edgar Grunwaldt, in general practice on Shelter Island. Shelter Island is a largely wooded island, some thirty square miles in area, that rises between the north and south forks of eastern Long Island. Dr. Grunwaldt was ideally situated to observe the comings and goings and the morbid proclivities of *I. dammini*. Although Lyme disease first caught the eye of science in 1976, in the little Connecticut community from which it takes its name, it has, like Rocky Mountain spotted fever, long since outgrown its regional origins. Lyme disease has now been reported in much of the continental United States, with deep and probably ineradicable roots along the upper Eastern Seaboard, in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and in California, Oregon, Utah, and Nevada. There is, however, no place yet known where its roots go deeper than in Dr. Grunwaldt's Shelter Island. In parts of the island, especially in some of its most idyllically pastoral areas, the incidence of infested *I. dammini* ticks approaches ninety per cent.

"SHELTER ISLAND has been a laboratory for much of the investigation into Lyme disease," Dr. Grunwaldt told me in a talk we had at his home one Saturday afternoon—that being a time when he doesn't see patients. "We have the tick in abundance, and we have the disease. We also have babesiosis. As a matter of fact, it was babesiosis that brought me into the Lyme-disease investigation. A paper I wrote that was published back in 1977 in the *New York State Journal of Medicine* described three cases of babesiosis diagnosed here—the first cases reported in the state—and it came to the attention of Jorge L. Benach, of the state Department of Health and the department of pathology at Stony Brook. He was looking for a good source of ticks for research, and I told him he couldn't do better than here. It was through my interest in Lyme disease that I came to know Allen Steere, of the Yale Medical School. It was Steere and his associates at Yale who pioneered in Lyme disease and published the first report on it. And gave the disease its name. That was in 1976. You may remember the story. It's interesting. A woman in the Lyme area was the real pioneer. Back in the summer of 1972, her child developed a painful arthritis in the knee, and in talking with her friends and neighbors she discovered that a number of other children around there were suffering from the same thing. She apparently knew enough about arthritis to realize that a cluster of cases of a disease like that was unusual. She got in touch with the state health authorities, and Steere heard about the outbreak from them. Arthritis, of course, is only one of the forms that Lyme disease can take, but it was what Steere and his associates first observed. And at first they called it Lyme arthritis. I understand that the old-timers over in East Hampton had a disease they called Montauk knee. Lyme disease has probably been around for a long time. So has babesiosis. There was a disease along the New England coast that was known for many years as Nantucket fever.

"It was chance that brought me here to Shelter Island. I was born and raised in Argentina. I studied medicine in St. Louis, at the Washington University School of Medicine, and trained and practiced in California for about ten years. I married a Long Islander, and we decided to settle in the East. It so happened that Shelter Island needed a doctor. I started practice here in the summer of 1975, and one of the first diseases I saw was what I'm now sure was Lyme disease. I had several patients with a specific rash called erythema chronicum migrans, which has been known and described, particularly in Europe, for a long time. Erythema chronicum migrans is a distinctive marker of Lyme disease. The rash begins with a lesion at the site of the tick bite and slowly spreads outward, in a circular pattern with a red rim. It can be quite large—fifteen or more inches in diameter. I saw the same rash again in the summer of 1976, and I took the trouble to search the literature. Most of the reports I found were Scandinavian, some of them going back to the nineteen-twenties. I found a 1962 paper by three researchers at the University of Helsinki which discussed a possible relationship between *Ixodes* ticks and the erythema chronicum migrans that was then associated with meningitis. But you can't count on the rash as an infallible clue. For one thing, as we know now, it isn't always present. For another, it only appears several days after the bite and the initial symptoms. In any event, I started treating my cases with antibiotics, and that seemed to do some good. I followed Steere's work as it was published, and that's when I realized that what I was seeing was his Lyme disease. I remember a telephone conversation I had with Steere in 1978. He had decided that in certain cases Lyme disease was self-limiting—that it cured itself and after a while just vanished. That's true, of course, in a way. It seems to go away, but it really just goes underground, and then emerges in a much more serious way. These later complications usually take one of three forms. One, of course, is arthritis of the large joints—most often the knee. Another manifestation is neurological. It can resemble a form of meningitis or the facial paralysis called Bell's palsy. Those early Scandinavian investigators may very well have been seeing our Lyme disease. The third form affects the heart. When Steere assured me that the disease was self-limiting, I stopped using antibiotics. But then he dug deeper and changed his mind. We now know that prompt treatment with a penicillin can generally prevent the later manifestations.



"I was fortunate enough to have a role in the investigation of the cause of Lyme disease. Benach was involved, and Jeffrey Davis, of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services. The laboratory work—the most significant work—was done at the Rocky Mountain Laboratories, in Hamilton, Montana, by a team headed by Willy Burgdorfer, of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. They collected their ticks here on Shelter Island and isolated a spirochetal bacterium that they were later able to demonstrate was the causative organism. It was named for Willy Burgdorfer—*Borrelia burgdorferi*. As you know, the cause of syphilis also is a spirochete. Not the same one, of course. And untreated syphilis, like Lyme disease, can later reappear, with very serious consequences.

"The laboratory findings were published in *Science* and in the *Journal of Clinical Investigation* in 1982 and 1983. And that's about where we stand right now. We have the disease as an entity, we have the causative organism, and we have the vector—the tick. And we have an effective treatment. There are still some loose ends. The most important need is for an effective means of control or prevention. There is a search going on for an immunizing vaccine, but so far without much success. There is a growing demand in the endemic areas for a program to eradi-

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cate the tick, for a sanitizing spray. Many of the endemic areas are, of course, resort areas. There are good environmental reasons for opposing that approach. But there is another good, hardheaded reason. A safely selective spray is hard to imagine. And even if there were one it would hardly be worth the trouble. Advocates of a chemical attack on the tick don't seem to fully understand the nature of the tick and its life cycle. *I. dammini* is often called a deer tick. Its principal host is the white-tailed deer. That's where the ticks mate. Mating occurs in the fall. The males die after mating, but the females live on through the winter, and in the early spring they lay their eggs in the wild. Then they, too, die. The eggs hatch into larvae, and at some point in the summer the larvae, if they can, attach themselves to a host, usually the white-footed mouse—the field mouse—and help themselves to a big blood meal. Then they rest through the fall and winter. That one meal is all they need. In the spring—the second spring of the cycle—they develop into nymphs. It is in the nymph phase that the tick usually brings the disease to us—if it carries the spirochete, and if it chooses one of us for its meal. The nymph feeds like the larvae—once in a lifetime. But that meal is a big one—a long one, anyway. It gorges for several days. And it seems that only at the end of the meal is the spirochete transmitted to the host. Feeding time can be any time during the summer and early fall. Then the nymph matures into an adult, and mates. It's true that the nymphs can be found on your lawn. But the reservoir is the wild—the field mouse. The field mouse is a burrowing mouse, and you don't often find its burrows in your front yard. You find them out in the woods and scrub. A spray would have to be a powerful spray to penetrate the scrub and soak down into the burrow. It has been generally supposed that the tick finds a suitable host by sensing its animal warmth. It waits on a blade of grass or a shrub, feels the passing warmth, and drops. There is a feeling now, though, that more than heat is involved. It has been suggested that a preferred host exudes a scent, a chemical force of some sort, that incites the tick to drop. Maybe some of us are more attractive to ticks than others. My old dog has had Lyme disease three times. I've treated her just the way I treat my other patients. Of course, dogs range. Proximity to the tick is everything. I've had several cases of Lyme disease in elderly women—old ladies who never got any closer to nature than the front porch. They puzzled me for quite some time. Then I finally figured it out. They all had cats. The cats, being cats, ranged. And cats are mousers. My feeling is that those cats did their mousing at the source—at the burrow. Then they came back home and jumped up on an unsuspecting lap."

I had been thinking about *I. dammini's* principal host and mating place—the deer. I wondered if the deer might be a crucial factor in any attempt at control. I wondered if the elimination of the deer here on Long Island, or even just on Shelter Island, would break the cycle and abort the disease. Dr. Grunwaldt thought for a moment, and shook his head. "I doubt it," he said. "I think the tick would probably find another host. And, besides, I can't see much public support for a deer-eradication program."

I knew what he meant: *What?* Kill *Bambi?*

I KNOW of no one—friend or acquaintance or neighbor—in my part of Long Island who has had Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Nor do I know anyone who has had babesiosis. Lyme disease is a different matter, and this is not surprising. Dr. Grunwaldt told me that he had seen only one case of Rocky Mountain spotted fever in his thirteen years of practice on Long Island, and only twenty cases of babesiosis. But he has seen and treated at least four hundred cases of Lyme disease. I have a number of friends who have suffered its protean rigors. One of them, and one of the local pioneers in this morbid respect, is a woman named Priscilla Bowden (Mrs. Jeffrey Potter), an artist, an amateur flutist, and a knowledgeable gardener. Miss Bowden, a slim, dark-haired woman in her forties, lives with her husband on a verdant acre in the village of East Hampton, with expanses of lawn and many shade trees and flowering shrubs in a pleasant surround of woods. They have—or had at the time she took sick—a small brown dog and a large white cat. Her illness, she told me in a talk we had at her home, had its beginnings just after the Fourth of July weekend in the summer of 1982.

"It was July 7th," she said, glancing at a sheaf of papers. "A Wednesday—I keep a diary. It's not a 'Dear Diary' diary, it's just a kind of social record, but if something interesting happens I make a note of that, too. Well, I'd been feeling mean for a couple of days. Not actually sick, but just not feeling well. I blamed it on the big weekend of the Fourth. Summer weekends here are always a strain. Too many parties. So I dragged around, and then, all of a sudden, it struck. It started with a headache—a horrible, terrible headache. And I felt burning up. I took my temperature. It was 103.5°. That was around midafternoon. At around seven, I took it again: 104°. That was pretty frightening. I went to bed and spent a miserable night. I was still burning up the next morning. Jeffrey called Dr. Medler—Raymond Medler, in East Hampton. We were given his first available appointment: one o'clock. When I got there, I didn't have to say much. Dr. Medler took my temperature. It was 104.6°. He said he didn't know what was wrong with me, but with a fever like that the only place for me was the hospital. And right away. I said can't I even go home and get my toothbrush? He said no, that I should go straight to the hospital—Southampton Hospital. So I went.

"I was fortunate enough to get a private room. My headache was horrible. They got me into bed, and Dr. Medler arrived and started me on aspirin. It was amazing. In a couple of hours, my fever was down to 99.9°, and my headache had practically vanished. I felt well enough to ask for some paper and a pen, and I started making these notes. Then the aspirin wore off and my headache came back and my fever went up to 102.5°. They seemed to go together. First the fever, then the headache. Or maybe it was the other way around. My memory is a little hazy about those next few days. I made my notes, but the details are a little dim. Dr. Medler and the nurses kept asking me if I remembered having a tick bite. I said no—not as far as I knew. It was somewhere around that time that they began to speak of Lyme disease. I don't think I'd ever even heard of Lyme disease. I wrote that down in my notes, only I wrote 'l-i-m-e,' and 'arthritis.' That's what they called it then. They asked me about a rash. I hadn't noticed any kind of rash, and I didn't have a rash

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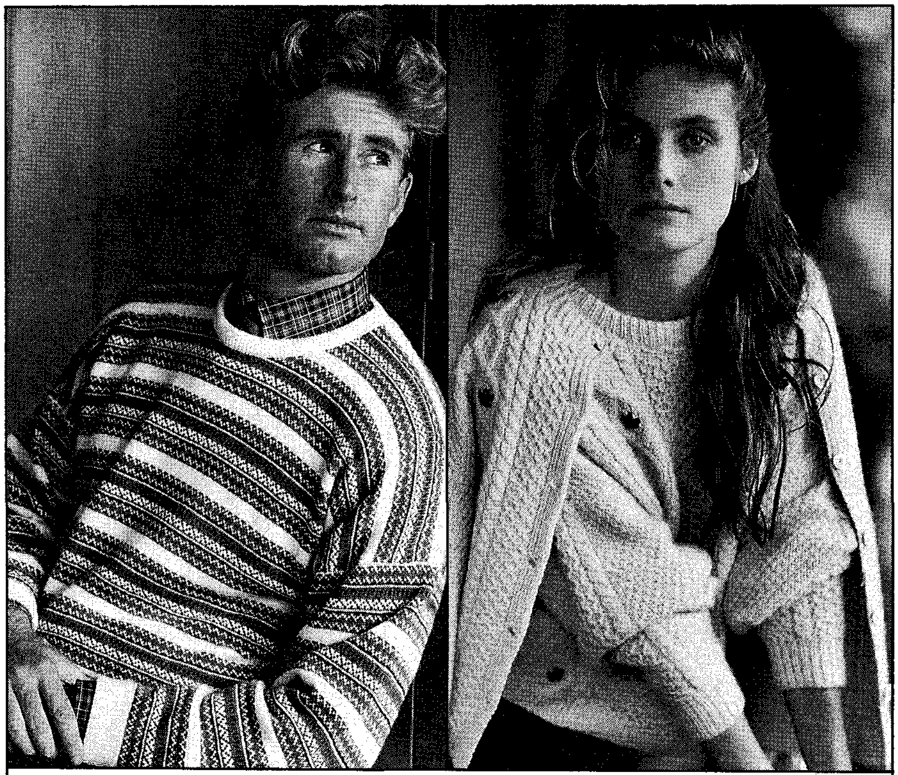

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then. Not at that moment. That was Thursday and Friday and Saturday. My fever went up and down, and so did the headache. Then, on Sunday, there it was—a rash. It was a circular red rash, about three or four inches in diameter. It was on my leg, my thigh. Then I saw two more circles, also on my leg. One of the nurses found another one, on my back. So now it was established. I had 'lime arthritis.'

"On Monday morning, July 12th, a man walked into my room carrying a camera and a black bag. He stopped at the foot of the bed, and said, 'I can tell you one thing that's the matter.' I stared at him, and he said, 'Your kimono is not tied the right way. I've been to Japan, and the Japanese are very careful about whether the fold is to the left or the right.' My way—I forget which way it was—meant I was moribund or something. Well, that was my introduction to Dr. Berger—Bernard W. Berger, a dermatologist and, I later learned, an expert on Lyme disease. Dr. Medler had called him in as a consultant. Anyway, he made me laugh with his kimono joke. We talked, and I told him my sad story, and he opened up his camera and took some photographs of my rash. He told me what there was to tell about Lyme disease, and put me on a course of penicillin. Maybe I was already on it; I don't remember. One thing he told me was that in four weeks or so I might have a strange reaction. We talked about the tick bite. He said it could have been a few days before I got sick, or it could have been two weeks. There were certainly plenty of opportunities for me to pick up a tick—the garden, the shrubbery, the woods, the cat. I felt much better after talking with Dr. Berger. I asked Jeffrey to bring me some drawing paper, and I did a little drawing—a self-portrait of me sitting up in bed. There's a color print of it on the wall over there."

The picture was almost a miniature. It was not much bigger than a copy of *TV Guide*. I had to go over to get a good look. It showed a dark-haired woman (more hair than face) sitting up in a raised hospital bed. She was wearing a red kimono—a red garment, anyway. A blue-and-white blanket (in July!) was pulled up in pleasing disarray to her waist. There was a suggestion of yellow flowers in a vase in the background. Just beyond her head was the grim shepherd's-crook shaft of an I.V. machine.

"Don't ask me about that I.V.," Miss Bowden said. "I must have had one at some point, but I simply don't remember. The blanket? Well, this is a picture. It's not a scientific illustration. Maybe I was having a chill. That doesn't seem likely, though, does it? I mean, I was discharged the next day. That was Tuesday, July 13th—my sixth hospital day. I wasn't exactly well. I was still on oral penicillin. My temperature when I got home in the early afternoon was 98.8°. But at seven o'clock that night it was up to 102.2°. Lyme disease is very strange. I woke up around midnight, and took my temperature again. It was down again —100.2°. The next day, it was normal all day. And so was I. I was well."

Miss Bowden squared her litter of notes and turned a page. "Now," she said, "it's August 27th. A Friday. I'd been feeling pretty mean off and on for several weeks. I took a nap every afternoon, so I could go out at night and join the fun. But then on that Friday I began running a little fever, and I didn't seem to have any strength. All my joints and muscles were stiff. The next day, I felt even meaner, and my temperature was 99.6°. By Sunday, I knew I was sick, and I spent a horrible night. It hurt to lie down. There seemed to be weights on my head and chest. I telephoned Dr. Medler on Monday afternoon, and he put me on aspirin. That may have helped some. But my stiffness turned to pain. Particularly in my back, neck, and shoulders. I've never been poked with an electric cattle prod, but I'm sure it would feel exactly like that: a stab of pain, then nothing for a moment or two, then another stab, in a different place. It jumped all over—back, neck, chest, arms, head. Then, maybe because of those jumping pains, I began to feel nauseated. And I developed diarrhea. I called Dr. Medler again the next day, but he was away—his father had died. I talked to an assistant, who suggested that I switch from aspirin to Tylenol. Which I did. I couldn't see that it made much difference. The shooting pains kept shooting, and in between prods I had that pins-and-needles feeling running up and down my hands and feet. I also had a very funny feeling here and there on

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my midriff and on my arms and cheeks—as if I were being splashed with cold water. About the only misery missing was fever. My temperature stayed at normal. It was very peculiar.

"Dr. Berger had told me that an attack of Lyme disease often had a sequel of some sort. It could be an arthritis. It could involve the heart. It could be neurological. I supposed that I was experiencing one of those sequels, and that mine was taking a neurological form. I don't remember when I began to realize that. I'm confused about a lot of things that aren't set down in my notes. I was too sick to talk to the doctor. Jeffrey did all that for me. At some point, I was put back on penicillin. Around September 1st, I began to be really nauseated. I couldn't keep anything on my stomach. I even had trouble with pills. I was vomiting, or trying to, every ten or fifteen minutes. But some of the pains were easing up a bit. I gather from my notes that the next couple of days were much the same. The days weren't as bad as the nights—trying to get comfortable enough to sleep. Then, on Friday, September 3rd, something new and awful happened. The left side of my mouth began to feel stiff, paralyzed. I remember trying to wash out my mouth with mouthwash, and my mouth wouldn't quite close. The mouthwash just dribbled out. I woke up the next morning, the beginning of the big Labor Day weekend, with the right side of my mouth partly paralyzed. It was almost impossible to eat or drink. I was drooling. And at some point I looked in the bathroom mirror, and I had Chinese eyes. The muscles around the corners of my eyes had gone limp, like my mouth. I learned later that there's a name for all that. I had Bell's palsy. That was the worst—that was the peak. Then, little by little, I began to improve. I had a consultation with an otolaryngologist in Southampton. I had a phone call from Dr. Jorge Benach, an important Lyme-disease investigator at Stony Brook. The days went by. By the middle of the month, I was almost back to normal. But even then, when I really felt well again, I wasn't. It was two months before I could play the flute properly. For a long time, all I could manage was the middle register. It was just a horrible experience. It changed my life. I don't know where I got my tick, but I never go into the woods anymore, I'm careful about petting any animal, and I've given up gardening. I'm going to exercise class, something I never dreamed of doing, but I have to get my strength back. And I never go out in the sun without dark glasses. It seems I have photophobia."

Jeffrey Potter had come into the room while we were talking. He stood just inside a pair of French doors opening on a terrace. He cleared his throat. "I suppose this sounds a bit silly," he said. "But there was a time, when Priscilla was at her worst, when I had an awful thought: We had never talked about death as something that might happen to one of us. I realized that I didn't know if she wanted a burial or cremation. I didn't know if she wanted a funeral, or even a church service. Or a memorial service. Or whatever. I know this sounds morbid and silly. But I thought I'd just mention it. It gives you some idea of how sick I thought she was."

DRIVING home from the Potters', I thought back to my earlier conversation with Dr. Grunwaldt. The telephone had rung three or four times in the course of our talk. The calls were all from patients, and I gathered from Dr. Grunwaldt's comments that they all had to do with ticks. "Yes," he said, as I was leaving, as he walked me to the door. "There's a lot of concern around here. Not everybody who finds a tick has Lyme disease. But they have the possibility on their minds. So do I. Not everybody I see who has a high fever, with the general symptoms of the flu, has Lyme disease. But when I see those symptoms here in the tick season—in the summer and early fall—I don't think flu. Lyme disease is essentially easily cured if it is properly treated early enough. Even then, of course, it can be very unpleasant. But those of us who practice here on the East End have an advantage over doctors outside the endemic areas. We have a high level of awareness. Of course, all doctors everywhere are more alert to Lyme disease than they once were. But if you were to come down with Lyme disease, I would hope it happened here. The unlucky ones are the ones who come out here for a weekend or a week or so and then go back home to the city and get sick."

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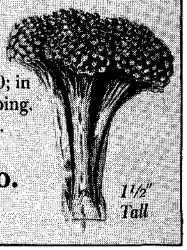

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LETTER FROM WASHINGTON

SEPTEMBER 1

THE Republican Party left New Orleans hopeful but shaken. George Bush's acceptance speech, like Michael Dukakis's, was widely deemed a great success, and for much the same reason: neither man is an exceptionally gifted orator, and Bush's organization, like Dukakis's, had actively and successfully lowered expectations. Moreover, much of the press, having lavished praise on Dukakis's speech, was inclined to give Bush equal treatment. Too much is made of these speeches: an acceptance speech is a set piece that the candidate has a great deal of time to prepare for, and about which he receives much advice, and he has as sympathetic an audience as he'll ever have. These speeches have little to do with how we see or react to Presidents most of their time in office. Yet it seemed as if the race for the Presidency had been reduced to a song contest. This is a curious standard for judging who should govern us. In any event, Bush's blunder in choosing a mediocrity, Senator Dan Quayle, of Indiana, as his running mate hovered over the Convention Hall on even the final, celebratory Thursday night, and as the Convention ended most people knew that the story was not over. While most of the focus in the last day and a half of the Convention was on whether Quayle had pulled strings to get into the National Guard so as to avoid service in Vietnam, this was a tangent. (It had become clear that his influential publishing family had helped out, but not whether Quayle, a strong supporter of the war, had been given special treatment—about which there is still ambiguity.) The real point was that Bush chose as the person to be next in line for the Presidency a man who not even he argued very strongly was qualified to succeed him. (Bush did not even mention this factor when he announced his choice.) Nor did Bush's top lieutenants, who were gamely and with varying degrees of enthusiasm defending his decision. (As the choice blew up in their faces, almost no one wanted to take credit for it.)

In the last dozen years—after Spiro Agnew and with the exception of the Democrats in 1984—we have come to take the office of the Vice-Presidency seriously; we have become more aware, after successful and unsuccessful assassination attempts, of the possibility that a Vice-President might have to take charge. That Bush, who must be aware of these things, and had several far more qualified people to choose from, chose Quayle, who from the outset presented other serious problems as well, raised unsettling questions about Bush's judgment. It also raised questions about the competence of the people around Bush, because Quayle was chosen by an obviously flawed system. More striking than the fact that the Bush people made mistakes was that they didn't make original mistakes. Everything that was flawed about the decision—the failure to thoroughly check Quayle's background and to thoroughly vent the pros and cons among the political advisers, the choice of someone unknown and untested—had happened before.

AS the Republicans gathered in New Orleans over the mid-August weekend before the Convention, the polls had begun to narrow following Dukakis's large gain from his Convention, but Dukakis was still leading (by from seven to seventeen points). Dukakis had not had an especially good couple of weeks. Some of his own people were worried that he had become too reactive, and was saying little, just as Bush had begun to step up his assault. (The worry about the fact that this remained the case well after the Republican Convention has led to a change in the campaign's management.) Bush, with the help of better speechwriters, called Dukakis "the Stealth candidate" (after the bomber that is supposed to be invisible to radar) and called the Democratic platform "the black hole of American politics." Since the Democratic Convention, Republicans, including President Reagan, obviously frustrated by Dukakis's elusiveness, had been jumping on the Democrats for, as they put it, trying to hide the fact that Dukakis is a liberal. (Reagan, in his Saturday radio address after the Democratic

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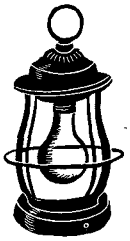
Convention, said, "You'll never hear that L-word—liberal—from them.") The Dukakis campaign got tied up for a week over the rumors, fanned by the Bush people, that Dukakis had sought psychiatric help after his brother died and after he lost reëlection to the governorship; Dukakis had got his back up over releasing more medical information (just as he had got his back up over the failure to reach Jesse Jackson to tell him about the Vice-Presidency), and the campaign endured several days of stories about possible mental-health problems (and lurid rumors, also spread by Bush allies) before Dukakis decided to release as much information as previous candidates had, and Reagan, with his inapt remark ("I'm not going to pick on an invalid"), went too far. (A Bush campaign official noted to me that the controversy had forced Dukakis to in effect say, "I'm not crazy.") On August 4th, Dukakis appeared at the Neshoba County Fair, in Philadelphia, Mississippi, an area with a racist history, and did not mention to the virtually all-white crowd the finding nearby of the bodies of three murdered civil-rights workers on that same day twenty-four years ago. (Last week, Jackson said that he wasn't ready to give Dukakis wholehearted support, because the Dukakis campaign had not brought aboard enough of his aides and because Dukakis needed to send "signals of sensitivity" to blacks.) Also in early August, Bush made two strong speeches on foreign and defense policy, to which Dukakis responded by complaining that Bush was being "negative," by bringing up once again the Iran-Contra and Noriega affairs, and by criticizing Bush for not yet having agreed to any debates. A Dukakis defense-policy speech given at New York University shortly before the Republican Convention, which had been billed as a major address, said little.



Bush and his allies in the White House persuaded the President to veto a bill authorizing funds for the military (despite the fact that his Defense Secretary and national-security adviser had approved it); in doing so, Reagan blamed the Democrats for trying to "redirect us only to weakness." Senate Republicans withheld support of a bill, passed by the Senate, authorizing "humanitarian" aid for the Contras—after military aid was rejected—thus setting up the Democrats for accusations that they had "lost" Nicaragua. The surprise action by the Federal Reserve Board in early August raising the discount rate, and thus interest rates, in the face of signs of rising inflation, was ominous for Bush (Dukakis called the increase an "irresponsibility tax" that was the result of "eight years of endless borrowing and spending"); but Bush got a break when the trial of Oliver North was put off until after the election. Bush also made speeches on ethics, indicating he would have higher standards than Reagan, and on child care, making an odd but, to the right wing, ideologically correct proposal to provide every low-income family a thousand-dollar tax credit for child care whether or not both parents work; a Democratic proposal would give the funds to day-care centers. Bush's child-care proposal (made before a women's group) was one of three he has made that would undo the tax-reform law passed in 1986—the others would lower the capital-gains tax and restore tax breaks for the oil-and-gas industry. Bush also pledged to a Hispanic group that he would put a Hispanic in his Cabinet, but Reagan was able to get on with this by naming a Hispanic, Lauro Cavazos, Secretary of Education. Reagan also accommodated Bush by reversing himself and allowing the plant-closing measure to become law. And polling by Bush's campaign indicated that his attacks on Dukakis—suggesting he is soft on crime, short on patriotism, and weak on defense—were working.

The formal announcement, shortly before the Convention, that James Baker would give up his job as Treasury Secretary (to be replaced by another Bush friend, Nicholas Brady) and take over as chairman of the Bush campaign came none too soon for many Republicans, who saw the Bush campaign organization as adrift, faction-ridden, and headless. (The press secretary had already been replaced.) The collegiality of which so much had been made early this year wasn't working. And some key Republicans were not pleased with the pugnacious style of campaign manager Lee Atwater; one told me, "They need adult supervision over there." Whether or not Baker was keen on running the campaign, he had little choice, since Bush is an old, close friend and Baker could have got some

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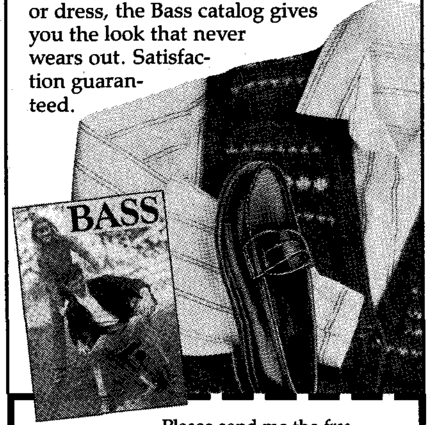

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of the blame if he stood by while Bush lost. Privately and publicly, Baker told people that it would be very difficult for Bush to win, because the Republicans had been in power for eight years and the Vice-Presidency was a difficult office from which to run for President. (The implication: Don't blame Baker if Bush loses.) Baker was expected to impose discipline, provide a smoother presence on television, and be able to talk to Bush as a peer. Bush, the existing campaign structure complained to Baker—and as Baker was to learn anew—could be quite stubborn on political matters, thinking his many years in public life gave him more expertise than his advisers.

Bush is a more complex character than he often appears. He is dignified and a gentleman, but he is culturally confused: not content to be a Connecticut aristocrat—his striking out for Texas to go into business there was something aristocrats did—he keeps trying to reidentify himself. Thus lately we have been told, frequently, of his affection for pork rinds and country-and-Western music. At an ethnic festival, he puts on a baseball cap and a satin jacket and eagerly samples a great many dishes. (His advisers have tried to persuade him not to wear the hats—as he did earlier this year when he played truck driver.) More than one Republican strategist pointed out to me in New Orleans that Bush has a continuing problem with "body language"—something they think should have been worked on more. One of these strategists said, "Body language is usually more important than content—Reagan's proof of that."

While Bush is by all accounts a considerate man, he also has a peevish, even spiteful, streak; people who supported Robert Dole, or otherwise—and sometimes for a not very big reason—got on Bush's wrong side, are not welcome in the campaign no matter how much they may be needed. (Most candidates have a touch of this, but Bush has a long trail of outcasts.) His family has also thrown its weight around; for example, Bush's brother Jonathan tried (unsuccessfully), with what he said was George's support, to oust New York Republican national committeeman Richard Rosenbaum, who had supported Dole. (On the Convention floor, Rosenbaum told me that Jonathan Bush had called him "and said his brother had sanctioned it, that they wanted the national committeemen to be original Bush supporters.") Bush is a far more determined man than his pleasant and sometimes weak demeanor would suggest: it took Baker some time to persuade Bush to drop out of the race for the nomination in 1980, and his comeback in New Hampshire this year was in some part due to his grit. He can be tough, and even rough, but his awkward attempts at showing machismo throw people off. (At the Convention, Bush said he and Quayle would be "a couple of pit bulls.") Bush is well educated and has had a lot of exposure to the world, but he is, according to people who have worked closely with him, intellectually lazy and undisciplined. He doesn't read much. The depth that we would like to impute to him is apparently not there. Thus, having few strong views of his own and seeming not entirely sure who he is, he has in his various public roles been able to blend into the scenery and adjust his opinions. But, unlike Dukakis, he has a large circle of friends, which includes a number of politicians, in both parties, who feel warmly toward him. For this and related reasons, some Republican strategists argue that Bush ought to agree to many debates with Dukakis, on the theory that the public would end up liking Bush better.

THE Bush strategists made what turned out to be their first mistake about the Vice-Presidency when they decided that, since the Convention would otherwise have no suspense, they would hold off the announcement of Bush's running mate until the last morning. While such announcements at Conventions used to be routine, the intensity of the media coverage today (which affects a great many things) made the speculation about a running mate the dominant story to such an extent that it threatened to swallow the Convention. The Bush people encouraged the speculation by dropping hints—so as to build what they termed "the suspense factor." The carefully made plans of Convention managers to get other "messages" through began to go awry. Over the weekend before the Convention, and on its first day, most of the talk in New Orleans, in the hotel lobbies, at the many parties, on television, was about whom Bush might choose. (New Orleans went all out to show people a good time, and its many delights made it a lot of people's favorite Convention city.) Various claimants to the position went through the indignity of selling their wares on the Sunday talk shows (although no one forced them to); by Monday, Dole was publicly complaining about the process ("I don't care for it"). On Saturday, there was a much talked-about story in the New York *Times* saying that Quayle (a late entry) was one of the finalists. We learned later that this had been leaked by Baker in order to head off the choice of Quayle (he apparently thought he was failing to dissuade Bush), on the theory that the idea of Quayle would meet with such opposition that Bush would back off. But it didn't, because almost no one believed that Bush would choose Quayle.

There were, after all, some very estimable alternatives. Robert Dole, whom Bush told was his second choice, had the potential of bringing real strength to the ticket, but his unpredictability and sharp tongue made him a risk. (His wife, Elizabeth, was not as serious a possibility, though her name was bandied about by the Bush people, who at one point had put out a very long list of possibilities—a new form of patronage.) Also, it seemed unlikely that Bush would want to spend the next four years in the company of such independent men as Dole and Jack Kemp (who had strong backing on the right), and he evidently felt he had the luxury of choosing not to do so. (Why Dole would want to be Vice-President is another matter; people who know him well say he is bored with being Senate Minority Leader and sees the Vice-Presidency as the route for yet another try for the Presidency.) One Bush adviser says that Dole and Kemp

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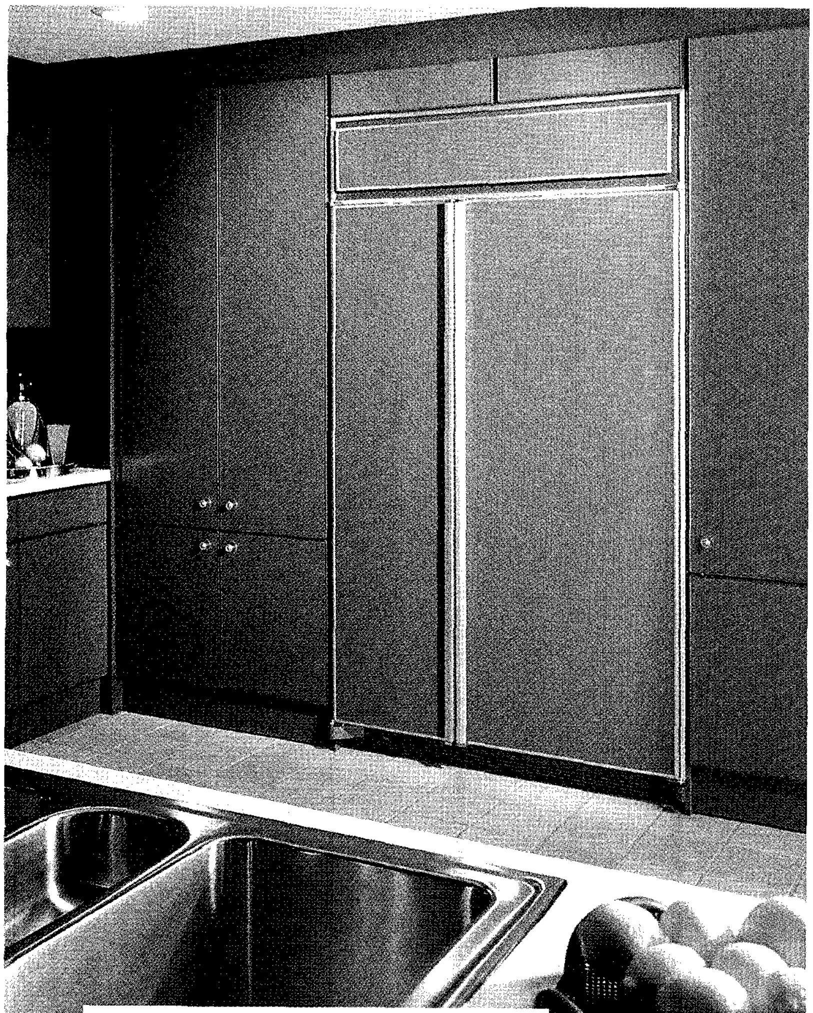

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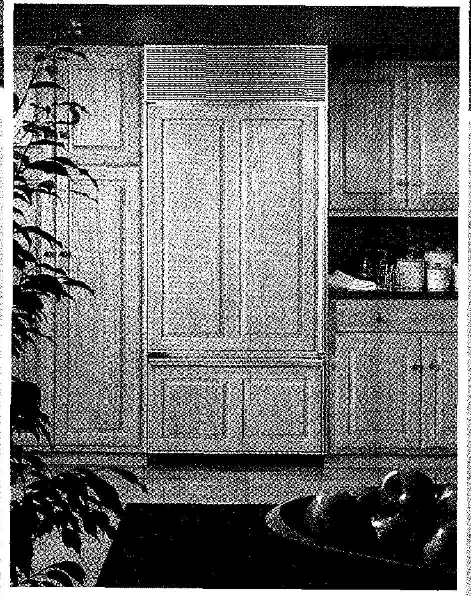

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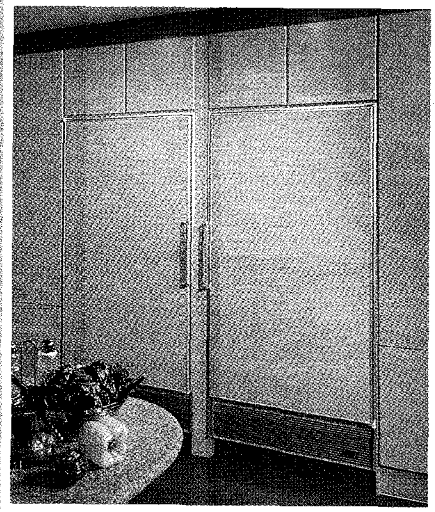

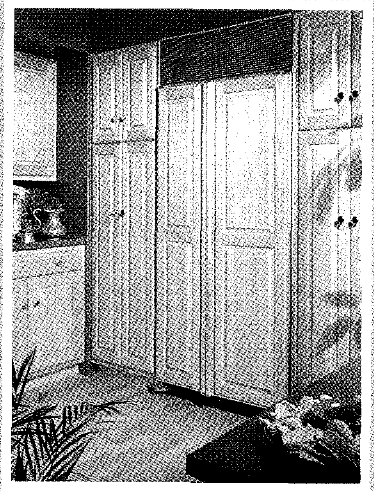

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(who aren't particularly fond of each other) cancelled each other out: that if Kemp were picked Dole "would walk," and if Dole were picked the Kemp forces would have been most unhappy. Some people in the Bush high command, and close to it, thought that the strongest choice would be Richard Thornburgh, the former governor of Pennsylvania, who was recently confirmed overwhelmingly as the new Attorney General. Polling by the Bush camp showed that only two possibilities could bring a state into Bush's column: Senator John Danforth, of Missouri, and Thornburgh. (If the polling had indicated that California's Governor George Deukmejian could have brought them his state, the Bush people probably would have tried to talk him out of his reluctance to run for fear of turning the state over to a Democrat.) The other attractions of Thornburgh were that it would be a sort of reverse-Bentsen—going at the Democrats in a state they hope to hold—and that Pennsylvania has nearly as many electoral votes as Texas (twenty-five to Texas's twenty-nine). Moreover, Thornburgh represented integrity as well as law and order, a nice contrast with Edwin Meese. (Susan Estrich, Dukakis's campaign manager, most feared that Bush would pick Thornburgh.) According to Bush advisers, Danforth was in the mix until the end, as was Howard Baker.

Bush kept his counsel to an even greater extent than Dukakis had—and this may have been part of the problem. The results of background checks by an attorney, Robert Kimmitt, an associate of James Baker, on the possible running mates went, on Bush's instruction, directly and solely to Bush. The political advisers had no opportunity to spot problems and raise alarums. Bush, trying to draw a contrast with Dukakis, said he knew all the candidates well enough that he didn't have to interview them himself. People who were in on the process say that no one knew whom Bush would choose, and, says one, "I don't think anyone other than George Bush can tell you why somebody didn't make it." Bush's advisers travelling on his plane to New Orleans formed a pool on whom Bush would select. According to two of them, no one guessed Quayle. One adviser said to me, "I can honestly say that no one knew." Another said, "When he told us, the reaction was one of surprise." (In New Orleans, Bush advisers quite noticeably said, "It was the Vice-President's decision.") Though about ten names remained in consideration until the end, everyone figured that Bush had narrowed it to four or five, but, says one Bush adviser, different advisers would have guessed a different four or five.

One apparent finalist, Senator Pete Domenici, of New Mexico, also had the support of some top Republicans; Domenici, who served as chairman of the Budget Committee when the Republicans controlled the Senate, is highly esteemed and, to boot, is the son of Italian immigrants, and a Catholic with eight children. Domenici had supported tax increases and cuts in Social Security payments in order to cut the deficit (as had Dole and a number of other Republicans), but as the New Orleans Convention approached he said that raising taxes may no longer be necessary. Senator Alan Simpson, of Wyoming, who is popular in Washington and a friend of Bush, was under consideration, but he brought no obvious electoral or demographic strength to the ticket—and he has a sharp and tangy tongue. Simpson, who had decided he didn't want the job, made sure he didn't get it by emphasizing, on "Meet the Press," that he supported cuts in entitlement programs, and that taxes would have to be raised, and by saying, on the subject of abortion, "I am pro-choice. . . . Once you flunk that litmus test you're doomed. It's crazy."

Opposition to abortion has become a litmus test for Republican candidates, and conservatives are in firm control of the Party. The platform, conservative in all respects, calls for a constitutional amendment outlawing abortion, and does not make an exception even for when the life of the mother is at stake or in cases of rape or incest, as many Republican politicians do—including Bush, who has changed his mind on the subject several times. The Party's position on some social issues, especially abortion, disturbs some libertarians on the right, but the right-to-lifers have the upper hand. As it happens, the names of possible running mates were run by Representative Newt Gingrich, of Georgia, one of the centurions on the right. When I found Gingrich on the Convention floor on the last night, he told me that his preference had been Kemp or Quayle. He said that he had told the Bush people that Danforth was acceptable to the right-to-lifers but was stylistically more aloof than Quayle, and that Thornburgh would have caused "some disgruntlement," because he hadn't always been correct on abortion. Gingrich told me he said to the Bush people that "either Kemp or Quayle would be the best choices," and that "if for any reason they couldn't pick Kemp, Quayle would be a great choice and would send the right signal to the movement." He said that Phyllis Schlafly and Paul Weyrich (head of the Free Congress Foundation) were delighted with the choice.

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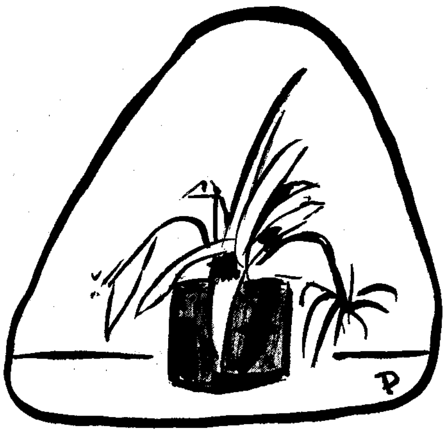
Among the reasons hardly anyone thought that Bush would pick Quayle were his reputation as a lightweight, the fact that Indiana is a reliable Republican state (though Bush was behind there as the Convention opened) and has few electoral votes (twelve), and the fact that he comes from a family of great wealth. It was assumed that Bush would vary the ticket, especially since the Dukakis campaign was running at him as being an aristocrat who is out of touch with mainstream Americans. At a bash thrown by the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* on Saturday night, one right-wing activist said he had just heard that the Quayle family trust fund is worth hundreds of millions of dollars—"That will certainly solve our silver-spoon problem," he said. Other reasons most people assumed that Quayle wouldn't be picked were that he was both unknown and untested and hadn't been subject to the merciless scrutiny national candidates must endure. (Republican elders warned Bush against selecting someone untested, especially at such a late date.) Another reason was that whatever the facts were about Quayle's golfing weekend, in 1980, with two fellow House members and the lobbyist Paula Parkinson, who later posed nude in *Playboy*—Quayle had said he had nothing to do with Parkinson, who was another congressman's companion—common sense dictates that you don't, if you can help it, start out a campaign with something you have to explain. (On the last day of the Convention, one right-wing leader speculated glumly that Parkinson would reemerge—as she did the following week, claiming, to *Playboy*, that Quayle had tried to get her to make love to him. Quayle, talking with reporters at his home while he was symbolically throwing out his trash, denounced the story as "totally untrue.")

Bush, obviously, had his own reasons, objective and subjective, for choosing Quayle—picking a running mate is a little like picking a spouse. It is the case that Quayle was championed by Bush's pollster, Robert Teeter, and his media adviser, Roger Ailes. (Quayle was also supported by Craig Fuller, Bush's chief of staff.) In New Orleans, after the selection blew up in the Bush campaign's face, Teeter let it be known that Ailes had been the more enthusiastic Quayle supporter. The selection has also been attributed to Atwater, but Quayle was not among Atwater's top two choices (Kemp and Elizabeth Dole were), and though he did favor the idea of picking someone of a younger generation than Bush, he had in mind someone older than Quayle. Both Teeter and Ailes apparently saw Quayle as a fresh face (in that they were correct), a "baby boomer" who might attract the votes of millions of others born since the Second World War. (Many people had thought that the idea that those of a given generation would vote alike had gone out with Gary Hart and Joseph Biden. And the idea that baby boomers will flock to one of their own is unproven. One of the most successful politicians with this age group is Ronald Reagan.) Moreover, their argument went, Quayle could help in the Midwest and energize the right. (A recent Quayle press conference, in Missouri, was cut off after two and a half minutes when Quayle stumbled over answers to questions about farm programs.) Quayle has an almost uniformly hard conservative voting record—though he did co-sponsor a jobs program with Edward Kennedy. Quayle has voted against civil-rights legislation, and he led the Senate opposition to the plant-closing bill. A number of Republicans in New Orleans, among them some conservatives who backed Kemp, whose politics include reaching out to blue-collar workers and to blacks, thought the ticket would have been stronger if it offered more "inclusiveness." On the Convention floor, a moderate senator said to me, "They need to go out and get some moderates. They need all the help they can get."

Quayle's selection was the media-candidacy theory run amok. In Ailes' view, Quayle's telegenic face would provide an attractive picture, the "visual" of him with Bush would be good. (Much was made of the fact that Quayle had been a client of both Teeter and Ailes, but both men also had other clients on the list of possibles.) Quayle has sometimes been said to resemble Robert Redford. (He doesn't.) Redford, after all, was the star of "The Candidate," a 1972 movie about a handsome son of influential parents who, with the guileful aid of a campaign strategist and ending up talking gibberish, wins election to the Senate. The famous last line of the movie has the victorious candidate saying, "What do we do now?" According to a story in the Washington *Post*, a law-school classmate of Quayle's said that Quayle had been interested in going into politics long before he went to law school; the classmate said they saw the movie together and afterward talked about it for eleven straight hours.

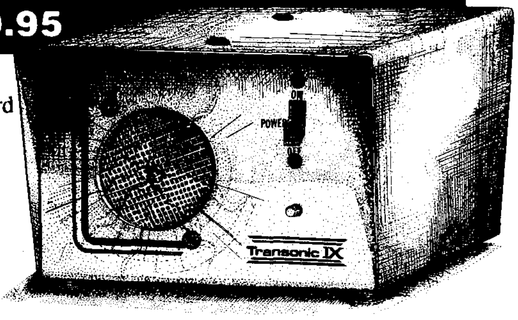
It was some of Bush's reasons (which, of course, can only be inferred), plus the questionable judgment that Bush displayed, that were so troubling. The week before the Convention, one Republican strategist said something to me that turned out to be quite prescient. Bush, this man said, would select someone who would "reaffirm that everything he's done is correct." Thus he would pick someone who would be unto him as he had been unto Reagan: grateful, unquestionably loyal, and even malleable. A good bit of amateur psychology was practiced in New Orleans—but that doesn't make the theories wrong. It was speculated that Bush did indeed want someone like himself, or who could be made like himself—and also someone with whom he would be socially comfortable. Quayle would be no threat. David Keene, who heads the American Conservative Union and worked in Bush's 1980 campaign, said to me in New Orleans, "Quayle's ideology is O.K., but only counts for that much"—he held his thumb and forefinger a quarter-inch apart. He added, "I don't think Bush picked him because he's conservative; I think he picked him for social and cultural reasons." All of the theories notwithstanding, when Bush, on Tuesday afternoon, shortly after his arrival in New Orleans, announced that his choice was Quayle, the general reaction was one of sheer astonishment.



Quayle's début was not auspicious. The announcement scene was strange to begin with, almost certainly because it hadn't been planned that way. Bush was standing in front of the stern-wheeler, the Natchez, that had brought him from the naval air station where he had landed (and seen Reagan off to California), addressing a rally. In an attempt to be informal, he had removed his tie and jacket and stood there in a short-sleeved shirt, which made him look concave. When Quayle was announced, he bounded up on the stage from out of the crowd and, alternately grabbing a startled-looking Bush's arm and jumping up and down and waving his own arms, he shouted a number of vacancies: "Believe me, we will win, because America cannot afford to lose!" Nearly punching Bush in the stomach, Quayle cried, "Let's go get 'em!" (Quayle shouts and waves his arms on the Senate floor as well.) A team selected by the Bush campaign to break in and run the campaign of whomever Bush named was awaiting Quayle. The Dukakis campaign did a similar but less dominating thing for Bentsen, though Bentsen was more seasoned. A Vice-Presidential candidate can be unprepared for the daunting demands and brutal pressures of a national campaign. Quayle was especially unprepared. His team is headed by Stuart Spencer, a shrewd political consultant, who managed Reagan's two campaigns for governor of California and has remained an adviser. He is someone Nancy Reagan calls on in a crisis. (Spencer, one of those who have got on Bush's wrong side, was not welcome in his campaign; James Baker got him for the Vice-Presidential duty.) Spencer had hoped for Domenici; he had his work cut out for him.

Shortly after six-thirty that evening, Baker and Teeter held a press conference at which they made the case for Quayle; the interesting thing was that they felt they had to. Baker, an experienced lawyer and political salesman who is always in command, looked very unconvinced of his case. (On the other hand, Pat Robertson and Gordon Humphrey, a right-wing senator from New Hampshire, who had threatened to lead a walkout from the Convention if an appropriate conservative wasn't picked, had both been on television praising the selection of Quayle.) Baker, looking grim, told the press conference that putting "the first baby boomer on a national ticket" was "a bold stroke." Asked if Bush felt he had picked the person best qualified to succeed him if necessary, Baker—who on one of the Sunday shows had said that the first criterion should be for "someone who is clearly competent to be President of the United States in the event some misfortune befell the President"—replied, "The issue is not who might have been the very best qualified to be President. The issue is getting someone who is extremely well qualified to be President and who might have some other attributes as well."

As soon as a press conference held by Bush and Quayle the following morning was over, both the Bush people and the press knew there were problems. Quayle, looking frightened and nervous, gave evasive and clipped responses to questions about Parkinson and about his service in the National Guard, as well as to questions about his wealth and about the secret funding of the Contras. (Rob Owen, who was North's courier, had worked in Quayle's office in 1982 and 1983, met North at that time, and tried to help the Contras then; this was during the congressional ban on military aid to the Contras.) The Bush people said that Quayle had bumbled on the Guard and Parkinson matters because he had been prepped for different questions on these subjects. This was not reassuring. A



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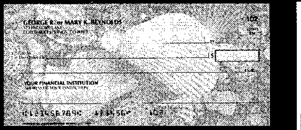
number of people there, including Bush people, felt that if Quayle had at least indicated an awareness of the unfairness in the fact that the Vietnam War was largely fought by those who didn't have the money or connections to avoid it, he might have been all right. It was not until later that day that the fact that Quayle had called on his family's connections to get into the Guard came to light—"Calls were made," Quayle said in one network interview that evening—and it became the topic of much of the television coverage that night. The implication was that Quayle had received special treatment—though the facts weren't known. If the Bush people had checked into this further, they might have been better able to deal with the situation.

On Wednesday afternoon, the Bush people hastily put together a press conference at which various senators, some of whom were known not to have too high a regard for Quayle, attested to his value as Bush's running mate. Some senators arrived late and hurriedly, having just been rounded up by the Bush people. It was noticeable that several of them cited as the reason for their enthusiasm the observation that Quayle would be an "enthusiastic" campaigner. (The numerous testimonials gave one the feeling that we were attending Quayle's funeral.) In fact, from virtually the time Quayle was named, senators who praised Quayle publicly said quite different things once the television cameras were gone. Senator William Cohen, of Maine, who had been widely quoted as saying of Quayle's having been chosen, "I'm stunned," said to me on the Convention floor Thursday night, "The question isn't whether he's too young; the question is whether he's young and *wise*." (Quayle is forty-one, but the question raised by a number of people in New Orleans was not about his age but his maturity.) Off the record, a number of senators went further in questioning the choice. John McCain, of Arizona, who as a Navy fighter pilot spent over five years as a P.O.W. in North Vietnam, and whom the Bush campaign made heavy use of during the National Guard flap, privately told people that he and Quayle, both of whom are members of the Armed Services Committee, had attended a defense briefing of Bush, and that he himself had gone home most unimpressed with Quayle's grasp of the subject.

A fair number of rumors were swirling around New Orleans, and on Wednesday night the Bush campaign went into a crisis mode. The high command cancelled Quayle's scheduled television appearances for the next morning and met well into the night, tracking down rumors and deciding what to do. The meetings resumed the next morning. All of this fed the crisis atmosphere, and, in the hyperexcitable Convention setting, people, gathered in hotel lobbies and meeting over lunch, began to not only speculate on whether Quayle would be dropped from the ticket but rehearse what Quayle would say upon taking himself out. ("I do not wish to be a burden to the ticket," etc.) The most dramatic thing that has happened before becomes the expected. The Bush people later said, uniformly, that dropping Quayle "was never seriously considered"—a phrase that is not airtight. They understood, of course, that having to drop him would be a calamity, might end the election then and there. So the better, and chosen, option was to try to tough it out. Who knew? Maybe he could still end up a plus for the ticket—a possibility that could not be ruled out.

THE Vice-Presidential speculation and then uproar seriously interfered with the messages the Convention planners hoped to send. (It also diverted attention from Bentsen's financial records, which were released Wednesday. The plan was to release them at a time when attention would be on Bush's running mate, but, because of Quayle, this scheme succeeded beyond the Dukakis and Bentsen people's wildest dreams. Press examination of the records was largely perfunctory. Though it did come out that Bentsen was worth at least ten million dollars—a figure that had once worried the Dukakis and Bentsen people—Quayle's supposed wealth made Bentsen look like a man of modest means.) The Convention planners intended to tear down Dukakis and build up Bush—in that order—and to talk about how much better things have been under Reagan than they were under Carter, and warn of the consequences of electing another Democrat. The goal, said one strategist, "is to drive Dukakis's negatives up and drive George's down." It was to be neither a polite Convention nor a polite campaign. A senior official of the Bush campaign had said to me before the Convention that the purpose of drawing "the contrast" between Bush and Dukakis in the course of the campaign would be to "keep the focus on the other guy—you always want to keep the focus on your opponent." There are plans for tough ads against Dukakis on emotional issues, such as Massachusetts' furlough program (under which a convicted killer escaped and committed rape and robbery). Stuart Spencer said to me in New Orleans, talking about the campaign to come, "It's going to be no prisoners taken—lots of negative advertising, lots of charges by surrogates, and any time there's an opening, take it." Roger Ailes said to me recently, "Dukakis is a mean little guy; he complains that people are mean to him and he gets under and rabbit-punches, knees in the groin. He pulls it off with this weary, arrogant façade—'Oh, they're being so mean to me.' " Warming to his subject, Ailes said, "He's the most vicious, dirty politician in America." One strategist said, "You have to keep the pressure on, like this"—and he made the sign of a knife at the throat. He added, "The Dukakis campaign hasn't been under pressure; they've never been up against a group like this one. Dukakis will have crosscurrent media coming at him from all sides." An effort would be made to force Dukakis into making a mistake. A strategist also told me that pressure would be brought on Kitty Dukakis, on the theory that she can be high-strung, and therefore vulnerable. The first example of this strategy may have been the charge made last week by Senator Steve Symms, of Idaho, that he had heard that "there are pictures around" showing Kitty Dukakis burning the American flag at a sixties anti-war demonstration. Symms offered no documentation, and Mrs. Dukakis flatly denied that such a thing had taken place.

Convention planners said there would be no "personal attacks," of the sort that the Democratic keynote speaker and Kennedy ("Where was George?") had made; this Convention would stick to the "issues." In their effort to hold the "Reagan Demo-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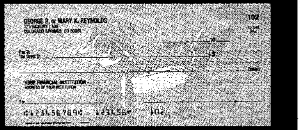
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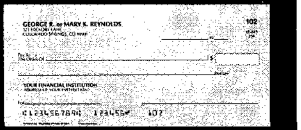
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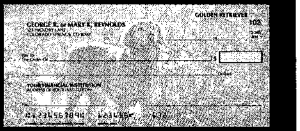
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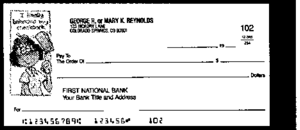
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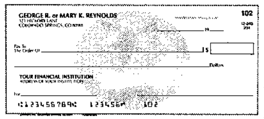
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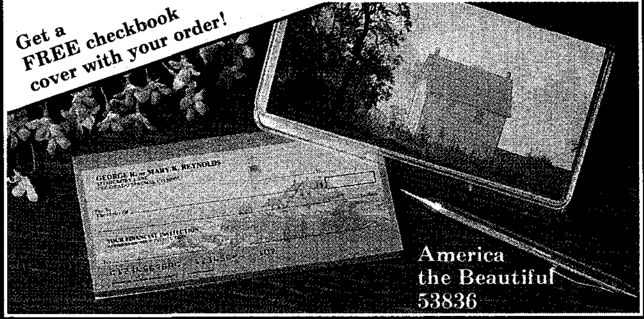

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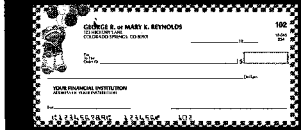
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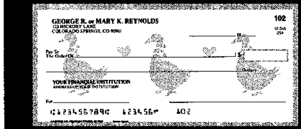
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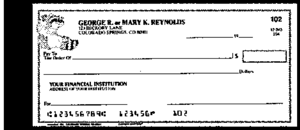
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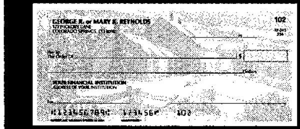
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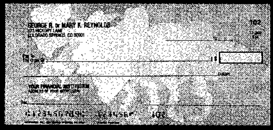
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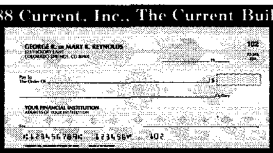
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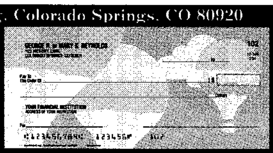
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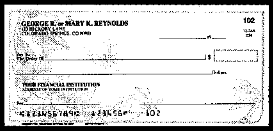
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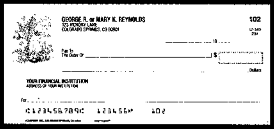
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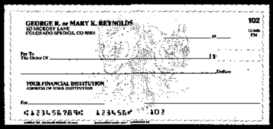
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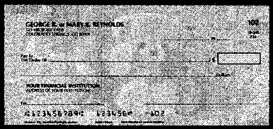
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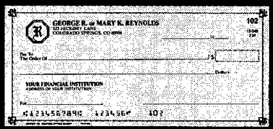
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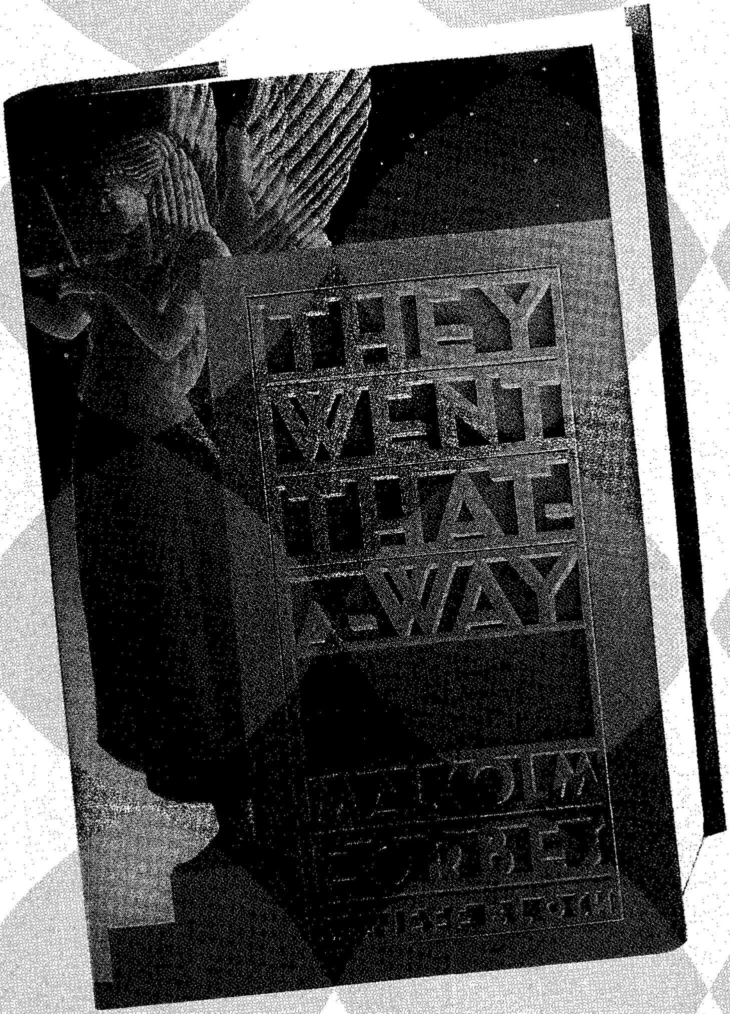

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crats," they would stress the defense issue and certain social issues having to do with patriotism and crime. Much was to be made, at the Convention and in the campaign, of Dukakis's veto of a bill requiring public-school teachers to lead their students in the Pledge of Allegiance, and the furlough program. Dukakis asserted after the Republican Convention that he had vetoed the Pledge bill, which carried criminal penalties, on the basis of advisory opinions by the state supreme court and attorney general that it was unconstitutional—but this is a difficult point to get across in the midst of a political campaign. (The Bush people were delighted that Dukakis responded, thus keeping the issue alive, and Bush seized on Dukakis's explanation to ask, "What is it about the Pledge of Allegiance that upsets him so much?") The Republican National Committee sent to every delegate a copy of a *Reader's Digest* article about Willie Horton, the recipient of the infamous furlough—who could have been expected to be quite famous by the end of the Convention but whose name was barely mentioned, though the furlough program came up often. Historians may wonder how it was that the Pledge of Allegiance became an election issue—as of now bidding fair to be the Quemoy and Matsu of 1988. A very precise Convention plan had been drawn up; this was to be the most scripted Convention ever—down to what delegation leaders were to say during the roll-call vote on the Presidential nomination. (The roll call went awry and lasted until past 12:30 E.D.T.)

EVEN Reagan's speech, the big event on Monday night, fell a bit flat. (Reagan was deliberately put on early in the week so as to get him out of town and give Bush the limelight. The Convention was deliberately not held in California so as to minimize Reagan's presence.) One of the problems was the hall, which, in contrast to the Democrats', was too large. The Superdome, which covers fifty-two acres and on the outside looks like a large atomic pile and inside gives one the feeling of being inside a huge mushroom, is usually used for football; the fabric curtains that walled off the unused half and the high roof (twenty-seven stories high) soaked up the sound, and the sound system that was used was unaccountably faulty, making it difficult to hear in whole sections of the hall. (The sound system was improved over the week but was never great.) The size also destroyed any feeling of intimacy.

The other problem with Reagan's speech was that he was simply having one of his off nights. (For all his famous skill as a communicator, Reagan is uneven.) He talked, in his familiar husky voice, about the high inflation and interest rates under Jimmy Carter, the taking of hostages at the American Embassy in Teheran, the "malaise" with which Carter will be forever, if mistakenly, branded. (Carter didn't use the term.) He spoke of numerous foreign-policy achievements: the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq ceasefire, the prospect for peace in southern Africa, the I.N.F. treaty. He rang many familiar changes but didn't stir up anything close to the frenzy he had at previous Republican Conventions. He's moving on—becoming irrelevant. He praised Bush, saying that Bush had worked on reduction of paperwork ("And George was there"), and said, "George played a major role in everything we've accomplished in these last eight years." He went on, "So, George, I'm in your corner." And he said, pausing for effect, "Go out there and win one for the Gipper." Sometimes it seems that Reagan does actually think he is George Gipp, the part he played in the movie "Knute Rockne—All American." The line between fantasy and reality is not a firm one in Reagan's mind. And Reagan understands theatre; Bush doesn't—and neither does Dukakis. (Jesse Jackson does.) Reagan's facility at employing myths and symbols is one of the keys to his political success—along with his easygoing persona, which is also partly a creation. He is popular, but less popular than Dwight Eisenhower was at the end of his second term. (Reagan's approval rating has been hovering around fifty per cent.) Moreover, there is a question as to whether Reagan has coattails. He didn't in 1986. Stuart Spencer says that Reagan "has never had coattails, because he's not viewed as a politician."

A DRUMBEAT of Dukakis-bashing emanated from the podium for the next two nights, and though Dukakis offers some real targets, there was a shrillness, and even a demagogy, to the attacks on him—and a repetitiveness that took the edge off. Dukakis's defense policy is fair game, but several Republican speakers, including the usually thoughtful Thomas Kean, the governor of New Jersey and the keynote speaker, went beyond that to question his patriotism. The Democrats had poked fun at Bush, but there was little humor in the Republicans' counterattacks. Republicans are fine folks, but something happens to them in Convention assembled that doesn't bring out their best. The delegates are almost entirely whites and well-off, and there is a whiff of smugness, even intolerance. Moderates, not to mention liberal Republicans, have been largely driven off, and those who still come to Conventions almost uniformly hold their tongue. Orthodoxy is the order of the day.

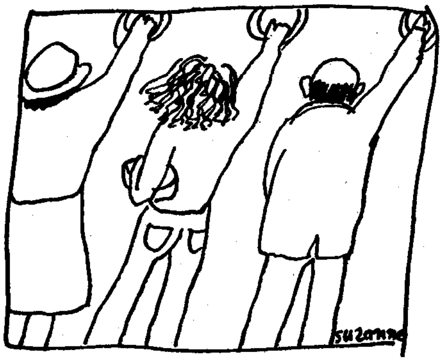
Representative Henry Hyde, of Illinois, who was put on the Tuesday-night program to offset Kean, who does not toe the line on abortion, said the Democrats are "the party of abortion on demand and every taxpayer is an accessory." Jeane Kirkpatrick, who had roused the Republican Convention in Dallas four years ago with a stinging attack on the Democrats' foreign policy, once again assailed the Carter Administration, and said, "Neither the United States nor the world can afford another learning experience like that." She said the Democrats have a policy of "unilateral concessions and wishful thinking." The "Dukakis Democrats," she said, "do not understand how the prudent use of American power" has helped bring about various foreign-policy successes. She called Dukakis "another very liberal governor with a technocratic style and no foreign-policy experience," and said, "Michael Dukakis doesn't say he will make America vulnerable, but that is the inevitable consequence of unilaterally cancelling our major weapons systems." She added, "Michael Dukakis simply doesn't take the need for defense seriously." (Actually, Kirkpatrick, who had supported Dole, and George Bush are not overly fond of each other.) Kirkpatrick's speech didn't go over as well as the one four years ago—in part because of the hall, and in part because much of the material was tired. And the New Orleans Convention lacked the hyperbolic nationalism of the one in Dallas, where America's victories in the recent summer Olympics inspired the frequent chanting of "U.S.A.! U.S.A.!"

Once Kean, who but for the abortion issue could be a major figure in the Party, got past the requisite attacks, he gave a thoughtful speech. (Kean, pointing out that the Democratic Convention décor had substituted vaguer colors for the traditional red, white, and blue, said, "I believe Americans, Democrat and Republican alike, have no use for pastel patriotism." He also said, "What does the name of Dukakis sound to you like?" To which the audience shouted, "More Taxes!") Kean, who practices what he calls "the politics of inclusion," and won reëlection in 1985 by appealing to blacks as well as whites (getting sixty per cent of the black vote), talked about the need for "freedom from racism, freedom from poor schools," and said, "The simple truth is that there are no spare Americans." He went on, "To those who are ill-schooled, ill-trained, or ill-housed we must reach out . . . because it is the right thing to do." He continued, "We will search out bigotry and racism—we will drag it into the sunshine of understanding and make it wither and die." Kean is what Bush might have been if ambition hadn't confused him.

Pat Robertson, who followed Kean, gave a thumping, moralizing, and somewhat zany speech. Robertson, who for a brief moment earlier this year had thrown a fright into the Republicans, had been almost forgotten. But his strange smile and chuckle brought it all back. And Robertson and the intense evangelical following he built are not going to go away. In his speech, Robertson, shouting the whole time, attacked the French Revolution and AIDS victims ("Disease carriers are protected and the healthy are placed at great risk"), and said, "Michael Dukakis will pack the federal courts with A.C.L.U. radicals." Like Bush, Robertson called Dukakis "a card-carrying member of the A.C.L.U." (The crowd booed.) Robertson played all the emotional keys: school prayer, abortion, big government.

The only speaker who really caught the attention of the audience on Tuesday night was Gerald Ford (who got on after prime time). Ford said, "This year's Democratic ticket is a tax increase on its way to happen." Demonstrating indignation at Kennedy's taunt, a lively Ford went through Bush's career, getting the crowd to join him in the chant "George was there!" Ford said, to cheers, "I'll be damned if I will stand by and let anyone with a smirk and a sneer discredit the honor, service, accountability, and competence of George Bush." And, like other speakers, he made Jackson part of the Democratic ticket—and threw back at Dukakis his saying, in his acceptance speech, "This election is not about ideology, it's about competence." Ford said, "If the *three* Democratic standard-bearers in this campaign think it is about competence, let any one of them, or all three of them put together, top the demonstrated competence of George Bush."

The Democrats having put on a big display about family at their Convention, the Republicans were determined to top them. The Republicans had started family as a theme, and they weren't about to cede it to the Democrats. At the same time, Bush's image-makers clearly decided that it would warm up his image if he were seen with his large, handsome, and obviously loving family—and it did. But the Republicans overdid it. Bush, who said that he had previously tried to shelter his family from public life and keep it as an "oasis," was constantly talking about and parading his family before the cameras. Four of his five children, and his Mexican-American daughter-in-law, all spoke for him during the roll-call vote. (The daughter-in-law also seconded his nomination, in Spanish and English—in an attempt to offset Dukakis.) One of Bush's half-Mexican grandchildren led the Pledge to the flag one night. Bush was seen on a screen at the Convention and on television watching the roll call with his grandchildren crawling about him. Perhaps now that it has been established that both Dukakis and Bush have loving families, we can set that matter aside and get on with other things. (Reagan, of course, does not have a particularly close family.)



ROBERT DOLE, though disappointed, gamely praised Quayle in his speech to the Convention Wednesday night and formally nominated him the next night. In his Wednesday-night speech, Dole blasted Dukakis as "one of those liberals who is embarrassed by America's strength," and attacked what he called "Dukak-eyed" ideas. Senator Phil Gramm, of Texas, who is moving into a position of leadership of the Republican right, and who nominated Bush, emphasized a key theme of the Convention. Attacking the "amnesia merchants of the Atlanta Convention," who want us to forget how bad things were under Carter, he said, "So help us God we are not going to allow them to do that to America again." During Carter's Presidency, said Gramm, who stirred up the hall, "the American flag drooped in shame." Asking a series of rhetorical questions, to which the audience responded with the expected "No!," Gramm said, "Is there anybody here who doubts that a President Dukakis would cut defense and wimp America and endanger peace?" Gramm slammed Dukakis for opposing the mandatory sentencing and the death penalty for drug dealers and vetoing the mandatory Pledge of Allegiance. "The competition of vision and ideas can never end until all the world is free, including . . . the Soviet Union itself." Gramm also praised Bush's record. His speech was followed by a flag-waving demonstration, at which the Republicans specialize—despite the Democrats' effort to catch up.

Following Dole's speech Thursday night nominating Quayle, the seconding speech was given by Indiana's senior senator, Richard Lugar. Lugar, the ranking Republican on the Foreign Relations Committee, is a highly esteemed man, and his standing there, also gamely, only served to underline the question of why Bush had picked Quayle instead. (Quayle is more dynamic, but one wouldn't think that's the top criterion for the man "a heartbeat away." Bentsen certainly isn't dynamic.) The Convention floor Thursday night was awash in speculation about Quayle's fate: he was still on the ticket, but no one could be sure what was coming next. Since the Bush people had missed the National Guard problem, there was reason to wonder what else was out there. A bit earlier, Newt Gingrich had said, on CNN, "All of us are clearly a little anxiety-ridden." On the floor, Gingrich said to me, "Quayle will be seen as a baby boomer—in an off-the-wall way, this controversy is an example." (As Gingrich and I spoke, the hall was darkened while "Taps" was played, to honor the war dead.) Delegation leaders had been primed by Convention managers to say that when Quayle joined the Guard there was a fifteen-per-cent vacancy in his unit—a "fact" they left behind them in New Orleans—and to suggest that criticism of Quayle's joining the Guard was impugning the honor of millions who had served in it. Quayle's brief acceptance speech was a series of banalities that did little to ease concern about his depth or maturity. But the delegates, egged on by Bush floor managers in gold baseball caps, cheered him noisily. Young demonstrators who had been brought in snaked through the hall and added to the noise, on cue. ("Quayle! Quayle! Quayle! Quayle!") Delegates to National Conventions have become automatons—compliant extras in a television production. When Quayle said, "I served six years in the National Guard, and, like millions of Americans who have served in the Guard and who serve today—and I am proud of that," there was another little floor demonstration, and the gold caps led the cheer "U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!" This cheer was repeated when Quayle, still shouting, said, of Indianans, "But, most important, we love our country."

Bush's speech was preceded by a brief film (it was kept short in hopes of getting it on the air) that began and ended with Bush playing with his grandchildren. The film also showed pictures of Bush being shot down in the Second World War. And there seemed some cognitive dissonance when the film showed Reagan being shot and the narrator said, "George Bush knows what it means to be a heartbeat away from the Presidency." Bush, coming onstage, looked handsome in his blue suit, and he smiled his crooked smile as another demonstration was mounted. (It had to last at least as long as the one for Dukakis did.) Speaking strongly but slowly (thus keeping his voice low), Bush said, "There are a lot of great stories in politics about the underdog winning—and this is going to be one of them." He gracefully spelled out the transition he was making from loyal Vice-President to candidate for President. Exaggerating a bit, he said that "the differences between the two candidates are as deep and wide as they ever have been," and he spelled out some differences as he sees them. He said, "My opponent's view of the world sees a long slow decline for our country. . . . But America is not in decline." Alluding to Dukakis's acceptance speech, Bush said, "Some say this isn't an election about ideology, it's an election about competence," adding, "Well, it's nice of them to want to play on our field." He went on, hitting Dukakis's line where it was vulnerable, "But this election isn't only about competence, for competence is a narrow ideal. . . . Competence is the creed of the technocrat who makes sure the gears mesh but doesn't for a second understand the magic of the machine." Referring to a term Bentsen and then Dukakis have used, Bush said, "They call it a Swiss-cheese economy," and, subtly working Jackson in, he said, to the delight of the audience, "Well, that's the way it may look to the three blind mice." And he added, "When they were in charge, it was all holes and no cheese." He cited various economic gains under Reagan, following each with "And I'm not going to let them take it away from you." But he also acknowledged that things could be better, and promised to create thirty million jobs in the next eight years (an extraordinary figure his advisers later backed off of). He dwelt for a while on the Reagan Administration's foreign-policy successes, and said "a prudent skepticism is in order" toward the So-

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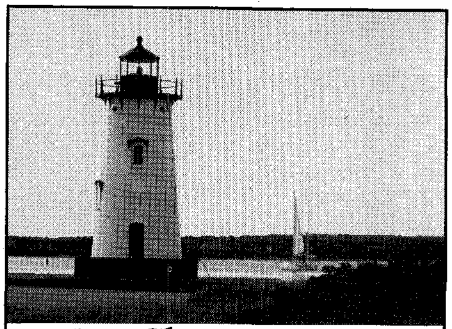

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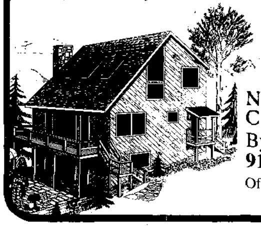

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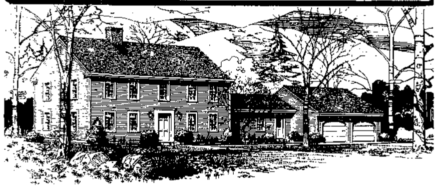

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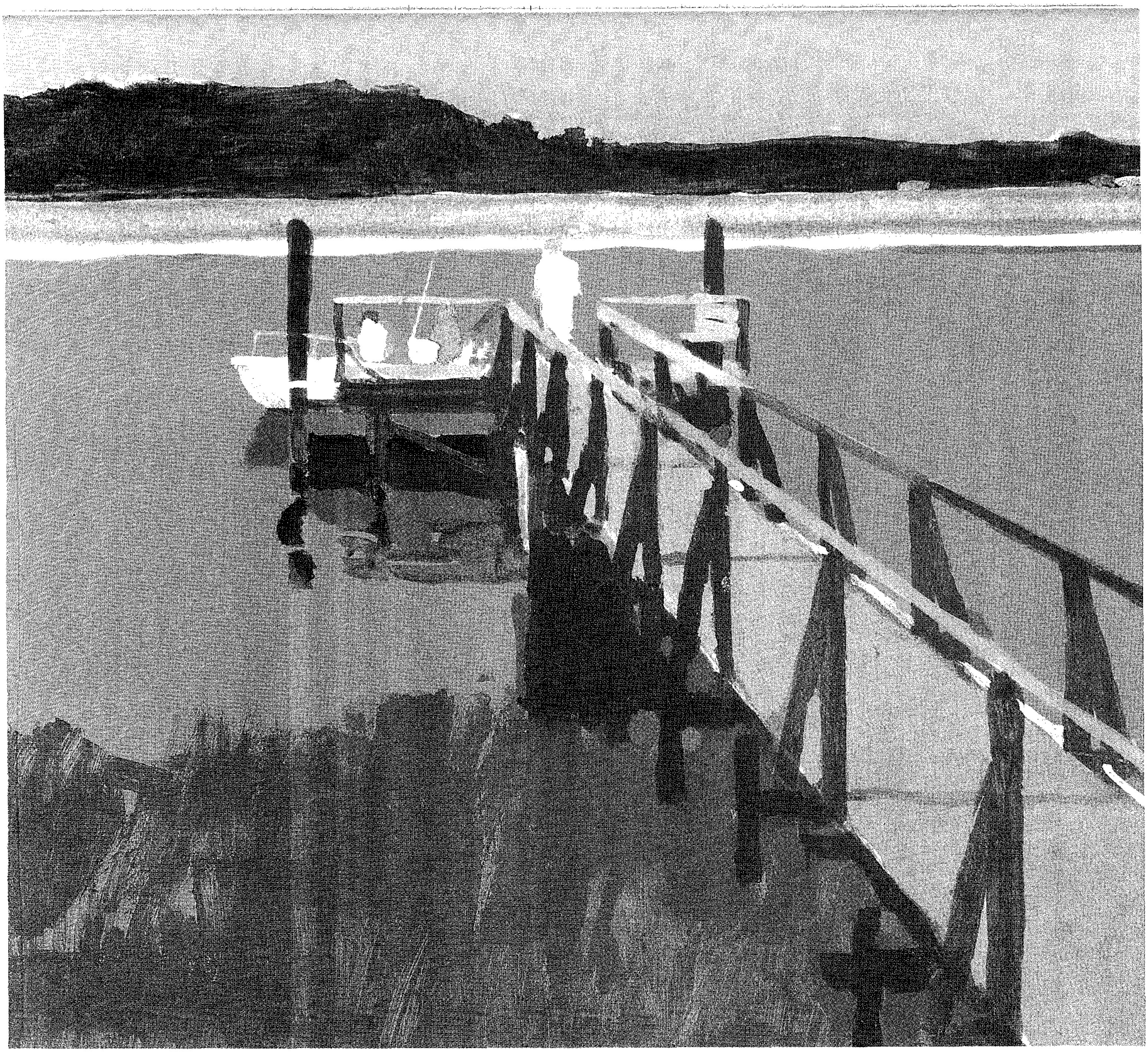

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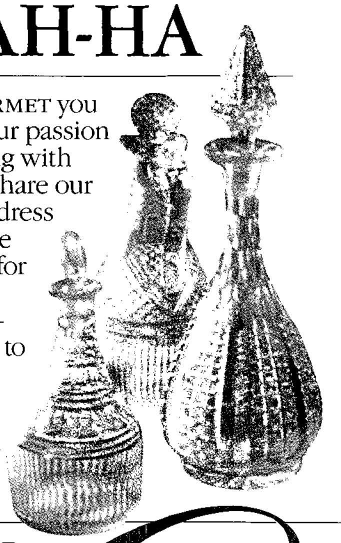

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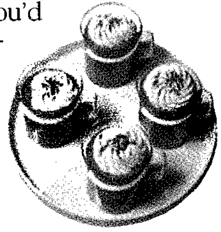

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viet Union. (Bush has been more cautious than Reagan.)

The speech was clearly aimed at, among other things, the "gender gap" (the fact that more women prefer Dukakis): Bush made no mention of aid to the Contras and made only a slight reference to S.D.I. He said, "I want a kinder, gentler nation." It was not clear what he meant—though Bush was putting himself forth as a gentle man—or whether he was intending to draw a contrast with Reagan; and other parts of his speech were raw partisanship and divisive. (Some of his self-description—saying "I may not be the most eloquent," that "I may sometimes be a little awkward"—was embarrassing; he ought to stop discussing himself and let people discover him for themselves.) The speech was a skillfully and beautifully written one, by Peggy Noonan, who wrote some of Reagan's most effective speeches; but some of the lyrical writing didn't seem to fit Bush—it seemed like clothes tailored for another man. So much artifice goes into these speeches that it is difficult to know to what extent they actually come from the candidate. Bush went down the list of emotional ("hot button") issues, pointing out his differences with Dukakis—over school prayer, the death penalty, gun control (he framed the issue as "Should free men and women have the right to own a gun to protect their home?"), and Massachusetts' furlough program, and vowed that he will never raise taxes. For Reagan's tough-guy challenge to Congress, "Make my day," Bush substituted "Read my lips." (There was no mention of the budget deficit.) The lines about guns and taxes sent members of the New Hampshire delegation (where I was watching Bush's speech) to their feet, but most of the cheering during the speech was being done by the young people who had been imported into the hall. Bush pledged to improve education, seek a drug-free America, bring the disabled into the mainstream, stop ocean dumping, and "put incentives back into the domestic energy industry." As he listed these things he sounded decisive, like an executive. He spoke strongly about the need for ethics in government, and said, "I hope to stand for a new harmony, a greater tolerance." He concluded, "I will keep America moving forward, always forward—for a better America, for an endless enduring dream and a thousand points of light. That is my mission. And I will complete it." And he closed by asking everyone to stand and pledge allegiance to the flag (for the second time that night). This was not in his prepared text. Bush has learned a little shamelessness from Reagan.

In the days following the Convention, the Bush people tried, with some success, to turn the National Guard issue against the press. This is an old trick. Quayle's appearances before veterans' organizations were a predictable success (but when he got off on other subjects he was shaky). Bush, seeming liberated, was a spirited campaigner, comparing Quayle favorably to those who had gone to Canada, torn up their draft cards, or burned the American flag—and keeping up the attack on Dukakis. Dukakis began to respond only two days ago (about Iran-Contra); meanwhile, amid worry over the direction things were taking, a decision was made to bring back John Sasso, Dukakis's former campaign manager, who resigned last fall over the Biden flap, as vice-chairman of the campaign. Polls taken shortly after the Convention showed Bush ahead, which was cause for thought among the Bush people—and also the Dukakis people—over how much farther ahead Bush might have been had he chosen a different running mate.

—ELIZABETH DREW

•

BRANT BEACH YACHT CLUB

A guilt show and demonstration will be held at the clubhouse on Tuesday, July 19, at 7:30 p.m. Courtenay Corrigan and Fran Hellinghausen, co-chairmen, are urging any members who have guilts to bring them that evening.—*Beach Haven (N.J.) Times.*

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[*From Fortune, October, 1944*]

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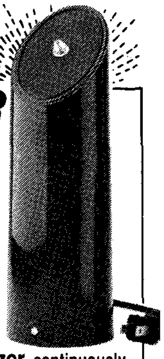

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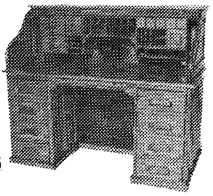


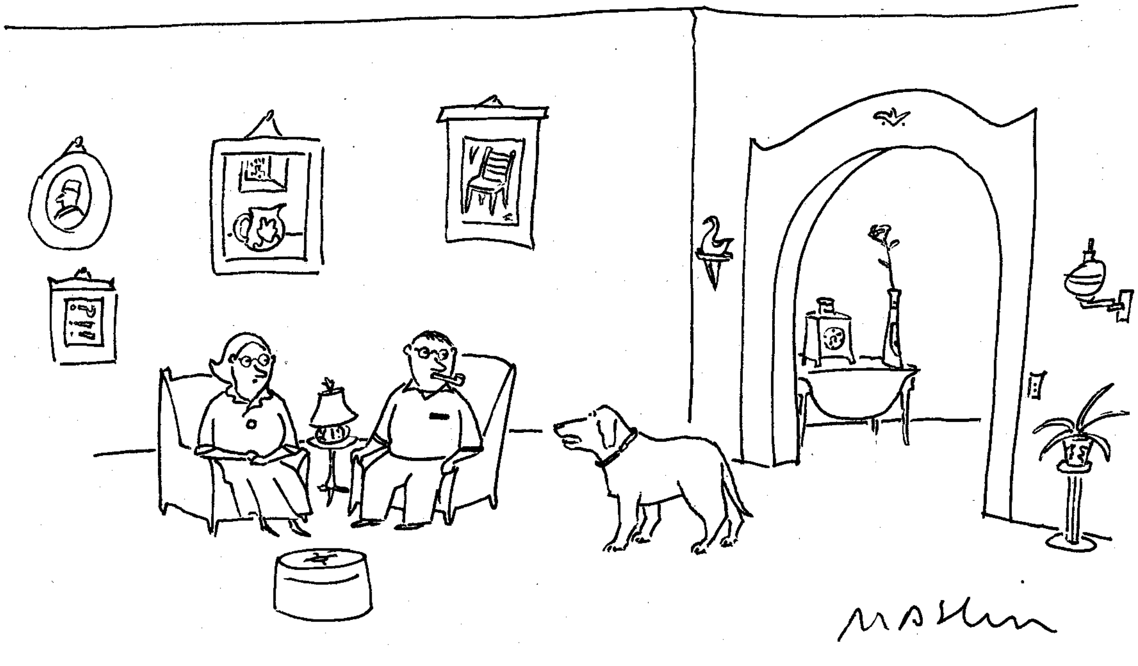
BOOKS

Doubt and Difficulty in Leningrad and Moscow

GLASNOST, like the sun breaking through, brings shadows. More, clearly, is to be permitted in the Soviet Union, but how much more? "Doctor Zhivago" can now be published, as being not sufficiently injurious to the health of the Revolution, and so can a smattering of formerly scorned émigrés such as Joseph Brodsky and Vladimir Nabokov. And not only Nabokov's chess problems, his youthful translation of "Alice in Wonderland," and his short study of Gogol have been published but two novels with a strong taint of political content—"The Gift" and "Invitation to a Beheading"—have been judged fit to print in the nervous homeland of their language.

Two ambitious novels by Soviet citizens have been recently translated into English and published here, after suffering misadventures on the way to their local printer's. "Pushkin House," by Andrei Bitov (translated from the Russian by Susan Brownsberger; Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $22.50), was written in the mid-seventies, circulated in samizdat, was published in Russian by Ardis Publishers, in Michigan, in 1978, and last year achieved publication in the Soviet Union. "Children of the Arbat," by Anatoli Rybakov (translated from the Russian by Harold Shukman; Little, Brown; $19.95), was suppressed for twenty years before, in "one of the most daring steps of *glasnost*" (to quote the words of Yevgeny Yevtushenko on the back of the jacket), it was published in the U.S.S.R., "where public libraries have a readers' waiting list for it in the thousands." The jacket of "Pushkin House," too, bears an encomium: Vassily Aksyonov writes, "Although *Pushkin House* has not been published in the Soviet Union as of yet, this novel has stood up for ten years as a firm part of the contemporary Russian artistic and intellectual environment. Andrei Bitov belongs to the St. Petersburg-Leningrad School of Prose with its ambitions to inherit the perfection of the Silver Age." On the other hand, Yevtushenko tells us, "*Children of the Arbat* is written in the tradition of the Russian social novel of the nineteenth century. It is a geological cross section of *terra incognita* revealing all the layers of society of the early 1930s in Moscow." The symmetry of the blurbists is striking: Yevtushenko is the most internationally conspicuous of those now middle-aged writers who blossomed during Khrushchev's brief cultural thaw twenty-five years ago and have since elected to tough it out as Soviet artists; Aksyonov, his former confrere and almost exact contemporary, is the best-known child of the thaw to immigrate to the United States, and now resides, jogs, and gives interviews in Washington, D.C. Their respective endorsements suggest that Rybakov's novel is that of an insider ("One of Russia's most successful writers," the back flap tells us) working close to the edge, and Bitov's that of an outsider (though five books of his short stories were published in Moscow between 1963 and 1972) who would rather not think about the edge. Suddenly allowed, last year, to appear at a Washington conference on literature, Bitov—a tall, rather stately man with thinning hair and a drooping, graying mustache—said of the new climate under Gorbachev, "Personally, I am tired of all the changes taking place because I no longer have time to sleep. . . . Change, even for the better, causes discomfort."

"Pushkin House" is a brilliant, restless, impudent novel, reminiscent of "The Gift" in that it refracts a sensitive young man's moral and aesthetic progress through a prism of allusions to earlier Russian literature, and of Andrei Bely's "Peterburg" in that it makes the city now called Leningrad a vivid and symbolically freighted presence and swathes a few hectic domestic events in a giddy whirl of metaphorically packed language. All three of these novels feel to the American reader as if they were losing a lot in translation. The Silver Age mentioned by Aksyonov has no precise equivalent in English prose; its peculiar shades of purple and playfulness and its close alliance with symbolist poetry suggest distinctly minor writers like Ronald Firbank and Edgar Saltus, while there is



"Once again I find myself in the rather awkward position of having to ask one of you for a biscuit."

nothing minor, in Russian, about Bely and Nabokov. Perhaps Nabokov's English-language novels "Pale Fire" and "Ada," and the more philosophically expansive Saul Bellow works, like "Henderson the Rain King" and "Humboldt's Gift," better suggest the controlled explosions, the high-energy conflux of poetic language and way-out thought, that the great Russian tradition threw off before Lenin and Stalin shut it down. Pushkin House is a literary institute and museum in Leningrad, and in a broader sense the house of which Pushkin laid the cornerstone—classic Russian literature. Epigraphs from and allusions to this literature (attentively footnoted by the translator) abound in Bitov's text, whose three sections bear titles taken from four masterpieces: "Fathers and Sons" (Turgenev), "A Hero of Our Time" (Lermontov), and "The Humble Horseman" (combining Pushkin's "The Bronze Horseman" and Dostoyevski's "Humble Folk," a combination rerigged in the epilogue as "Bronze Folk"). There is also some pointed, mischievous parallelism with Chernyshevsky's seminal radical novel, "What Is to Be Done?" It would no doubt help us to have read all these works, as even the mildly educated Russian reader has, but perhaps we can get the idea anyway—the idea, that is, of the superfluous man, the gentleman who floats above the depths of Russian society, and whose existence is especially problematical for literature, since in his superfluity he is nevertheless the principal bearer of culture.

Aristocrats in the dashing old style of Pushkin's Onegin and Lermontov's Pechorin no longer exist, but Soviet society has evolved new élites, and Bitov's hero, Lyova Odoevtsev, belongs to the professorial élite and is also a member, through his ancestors, of the nobility. Though Lyova's sensibility, monstrously coupled with the talkative author's, occupies the entire foreground of this novel, he is not terribly easy to picture, or to love. His face is not described until near the end, and then with cunning indeterminacy: "His facial features were devoid of individuality; although his face was unique in its way and fitted no usual type, still—how should I put it?—even though one of a kind, it was typical and did not wholly belong to itself. An expert might have described these features as regular and large, al-

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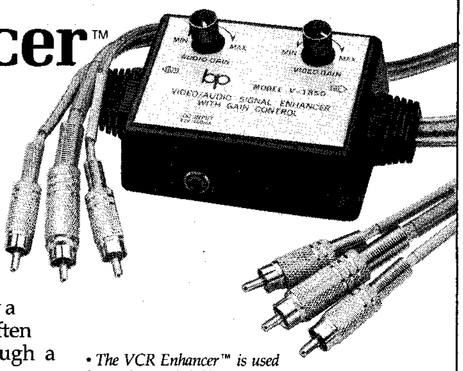

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most 'strong,' but there was something so hopeless and weak in the sudden down-ward rush of this sculpted mouth and steep chin that it betrayed, within the Slav, the Aryan with his irresolute courage and secret characterlessness."

Vague as he is, Lyova serves as the focus of three extensive, jumbled episodes: the return from exile and scholarly rehabilitation of his grandfather, the oscillating amorous life he splits among three young women, and the disastrous three days he spends as lone caretaker at Pushkin House while the rest of Leningrad is celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the October Revolution. The first and last episodes include long scenes of drunkenness, wonderfully rendered in its colorful, fluctuating fog and torrents of mock-profound discourse; "Vodka is the plot's myrrh-bearer," we are told at one point. In the plot, things happen and then unhappen; a lively character called Uncle Dickens dies, and is revived at a moment when his assistance would be convenient. Alternative plot possibilities are freely discussed, and sometimes several are pursued. The over-all movement is that of a "sluggish dream" lurchingly flowing toward a meaningless denouement: "And here at last is the sum, peak, crescendo-mescendo, apogee, climax, denouement—what else?—the NOTHING; here at last is that critical NOTHING, idol, symbol: a small, smooth, darkly glossy little thing, prolate, fits in the palm of your hands . . .! now you see it; now you don't!" The novel not only is difficult but feels to be *about* difficulty. In the U.S.S.R., into which Lyova is born in 1937, at the height of Stalin's purges, and in which he is glimpsed some thirty years later, concluding on the banks of the Neva that his life "exists only through error," nothing is easy or obvious. Family life is difficult, career choices, career politics, love life; what's more, writing a novel, in this post-Pushkin, post-Stalin, post-modernist world, is difficult, a procedure so tricky and tortuous that the difficulty (I confess) spreads even to writing a review of it.

Within the large and unappetizing inertia of this vodka- and doubt-propelled plot, this "always postponed story," Bitov contrives a microcosmic hyperactivity of phrase, sentence, and image which is, even through the hazy scrim of translation, engagingly vital. Dip in anywhere; small surprises keep crystallizing. "He kept looking at the watch on Karenina's arm. The watch impressed him: golden and tiny on her wide puffy wrist, it had drowned in the folds and lay there smiling." "The swollen Leningrad ceiling hung like a heavy, veined belly. Not rain, not snow—a sort of torn sky-flesh was coming down now, and it plastered the wayfarer in an instant, smothering him like the hateful and nauseating mask of a faint." The sketch of Lyova's family is surprisingly prickly:

> Since the chapter is titled "Father," we should mention this: it seemed to Lyovushka that he did not love his father. . . . Father didn't even seem capable of tousling Lyova's hair correctly—Lyova would cringe—or taking him on his lap—he always caused his Lyovushka some sort of physical discomfort—Lyovushka would tense up and then be embarrassed by his own embarrassment.

And yet when Lyova at last meets his grandfather, a linguistics scholar who was imprisoned for thirty years and should by all liberal and sentimental logic be sympathetic, the old man is repulsive, with an elastic face that seems to be of two halves, and a number of eerie mannerisms: "He drank long, delved deeply, choking, sucking in, soaking in, breathing in, sinking in, withdrawing entirely into the mug, he bumbled over it like a bee over a flower, and when he leaned back with a happy sigh Lyova noted with horror that the beer had not actually diminished in the mug—there was as much left as ever." Lyova initially has trouble distinguishing his grandfather from the old man's former labor-camp commandant, Koptelov, who has become, in a grotesque bit of *perestroika*, a crony. Where Lyova expects familial warmth, a young poet, Rudik, has usurped a favorite's place. As vodka flows, Lyova is roughly teased and mercilessly harangued by his grandfather, who rails against "this affront of rehabilitation. They're not afraid of me anymore: I'm slag. They threw me out into retirement—I've served my time as a prisoner and I'm no good for anything else. That's how capitalist countries treat workers in the textbooks." At last, Lyova is dismissed into the bitterly cold "failed space" of outer Leningrad, where his sensations mimic the pace of the novel: "He was oddly aware of time flowing through him. It was uneven and seemingly fitful: it dragged, stretched out, thinned like a

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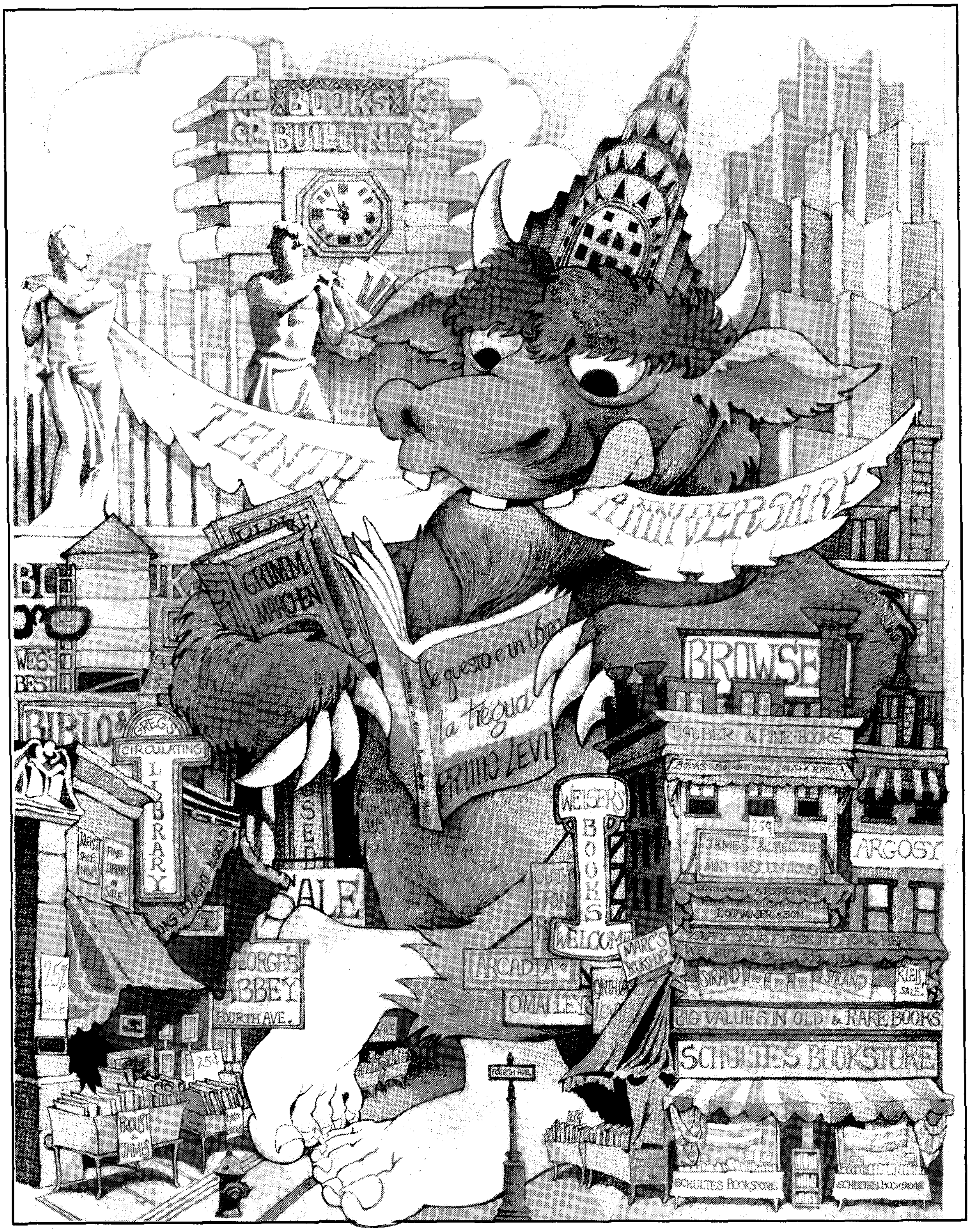
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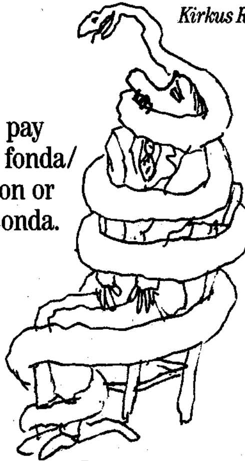

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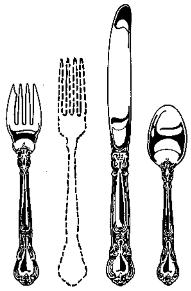

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droplet, forming a little neck—and suddenly broke.”

A real writer’s wheels are spinning, and a fine mind is trying to follow truth’s rapid changes of direction. “Were they [Lyova’s acquaintances] this many at the very beginning, I wonder, and did I, as author, fuse them into one Faina, one Mitishatyev, one . . . in order to give at least some kind of focus to Lyova’s blurred life? Because the people who affect us are one thing, and their effect on us is quite another; very often the one has no relation to the other, because their effect on us is already ourselves.” The women in Lyova’s triangular romantic life pop free of his obsessive concern with his own feelings—worthy of a Philip Roth hero’s—only for moments of feverish vision: “Now at last Lyova saw that Albina was beautiful, her lofty neck . . . that she might be desired and loved, though again, for some reason, not now, but by the remote Lyova who so generously had not loved her, by that Lyova, not this one still sitting beside her, still not leaving, and almost loving her.” Thus we learn that Albina, the unloved, has a long neck. Bitov’s authorial hesitations and apologies have a comic vivacity, often:

> In concluding our coverage of this gathering, we must confess that we’ve been somewhat carried away, somewhat too literal about our task, too ready to rise to the bait. This is all vaudeville, and not worth the trouble. Now it’s too late. We have trampled this stretch of prose—the grass will no longer grow on it. We shouldn’t have lost our temper.

As in one of Nabokov’s layered fictions, the hero begins to realize he inhabits a work of fiction, and is allowed to exult in “the cracks in the scenery (wind blowing in) . . . the general negligence, the hack melodrama, of a dream.” A work so energetically, intelligently self-deconstructive as “Pushkin House” must, of course, make literary commissars uneasy, while Communism’s cardboard house shudders and rattles around them. But renewal emerges from disintegration, and Bitov’s loving demolition of the grand Russian tradition forms a new installment in that tradition.

ANATOLI RYBAKOV is a good generation older than Bitov, and his “Children of the Arbat” is, compared with “Pushkin House,” an old-fashioned novel—less psychologically and aesthetically dense, more bulky with characters and incidents. Indeed, it would have benefitted from that old-fashioned device a list of characters in the front, with perhaps an appended brief history of the Soviet Union. It concerns a number of young people who grew up in the Arbat region of Moscow, a bohemian quarter west of the Kremlin, and the ways in which their lives intertwine and diverge between the fall of 1933 and December of 1934. In this period, climaxed by the assassination of Sergei Kirov in Leningrad, Stalin is portrayed as corrupting Lenin’s idealistic revolution with his own paranoia and power lust, and preparing with his Byzantine machinations for the great Party purge and show trials of 1936-38. The novel’s portrait of Stalin, intimate and lengthy, must constitute its central scandal from the standpoint of the Soviet censors and the principal reason it had to wait for *glasnost* to see print. To the Western reader, who has long had access to a number of unvarnished biographies of the dictator, as well as the scathing characterization in Solzhenitsyn’s “The First Circle,” this aspect is less than sensational, though Rybakov’s imagination does pull off some lively strokes, from Stalin’s tearful identification of his father, the Georgian cobbler Vissarion Dzhugashvili, with the Charlie Chaplin of “City Lights” to the aging tyrant’s gingerly give-and-take with a young Jewish dentist, who succeeds in making Stalin a plastic plate though the dictator insisted he wanted gold. But Stalin’s meditations on how to rule Russia, rewrite history, and eliminate even a shadow of opposition within the Politburo are less valuable—less purely Rybakov’s to give—than the sketches of ordinary Russian life in its surprising variety and flavor, during a time of growing oppression and, as nearly everyone but Stalin can see, approaching war with Germany.

The children of the Arbat are called Sasha, Yuri, Lena, Nina, Max, Vadim, Vika, and Varya. Varya, Nina’s sister, is seventeen; the rest are in their early twenties. Most are members of the Young Communist League, the Komsomol, and their friendly little world is shaken when their Komsomol secretary, Sasha, is arrested and sentenced to three years’ exile in Siberia. The reasons are obscure. He is headstrong and outspoken but an ardent Communist; just before his arrest, he successfully appealed his expulsion from the Transport Institute because of some satiric verses in the posted student newspaper. It turns out that he was condemned because during this fracas he had some casual but subversive conversation with Krivoruchko, a minor school functionary in disgrace with the Party. Krivoruchko merely said, in passing, that "this is a chef [Stalin] who likes to make peppery dishes;" Sasha declines to recall this remark for his N.K.V.D. interrogator. Though Lena's father, the old Bolshevik Budyagin, and Sasha's uncle, Mark Ryazanov, a rising Party official who directs a Siberian steel plant dear to Stalin's heart, separately intervene, their intervention does not deflect Sasha's fate; both Budyagin and Mark, the novel makes clear in its proliferating dark hints, are in precarious shape themselves, Kremlinwise. The subtleties of Party organization are not easy to follow, nor are the names easy to keep straight, but a sense of tightening control, pervasive spying, and irrationality descending from on high is conveyed so well that we feel relieved and even exhilarated when Sasha reaches the underpopulated hinterland of the Angara River, between Kansk and Bratsk. The arrangements of exile are rather informal in these remote riverside villages of native peasants within the immense taiga; men and women already outlawed allow themselves a relative freedom of speech. The author, who suffered such an exile, evokes the summer atmosphere of Siberia's rough Eden with the tenderness of remembrance. Sexual deprivation was not necessarily among the exile's hardships: Sasha begins by admiring the "very beautiful, stately Siberian girls with light brown hair, strong bodies, and strong legs," enjoys an episode with a barefoot girl, Lukeshka, who emanates "a scent of the river and new-mown hay," and ends up sharing a bed, in his assigned village of Mozgova, with the local schoolteacher, a petite and passionate Tatar called Zida. The novel's central theme, if one can be identified, is Sasha's moral education: he arrives, amid the system's outcasts and low-priority citizens, at the conclusion that "human feeling has not been killed in people and it never will be."

Meanwhile, back in Moscow, people are coping. Sasha's mother copes by getting a job folding linens in a laundry, and becomes, after a docile life,

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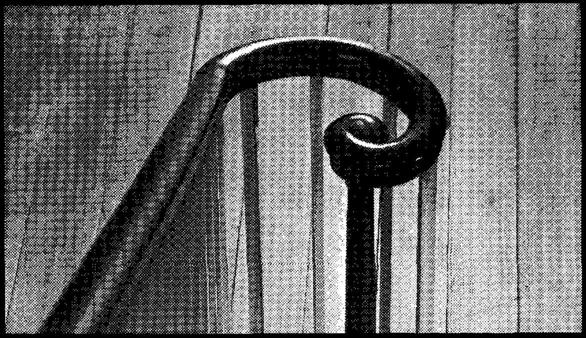

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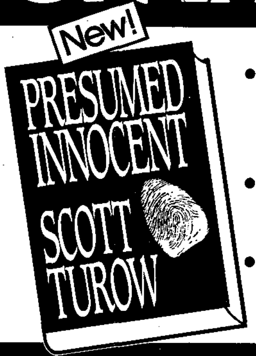

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independent and outspokenly anti-Communist. Yuri makes love to Lena, gets her pregnant, induces an abortion by pouring boiling mustard water around her feet, and joins the N.K.V.D. He discovers that one of his jobs is to "run" Vika, who in the course of her promiscuous, glamorous life in cafés and art circles has become an informer, sleeping with foreigners and relaying tidbits about them to Yuri in a weekly assignation that Lena jealously confuses with a sexual kind. Varya, young as she is, falls into another ring of the Soviet underworld, taking up with a billiard player, shady operator, and big spender called Kostya, and becoming his common-law wife in what was Sasha's old room. She finally frees herself of him and finds a measure of peace and redemption in that officially endorsed panacea, work. She gets a job as a draftsman, and the stolid prose approaches the lyrical:

> She laid the drawing that was to be copied on her board, covered it with a pale blue linen sheet, and pinned them both down with thumbtacks. She then wiped a thin film of machine oil over the surface . . . in order to make the tracing linen transparent, allowing the drawing to come through clearly and preventing the ink from running. . . . Lyova and Rina were full of admiration for her ability, if ink did spill, to remove it with a razor blade without leaving a mark. And to their amazement she could draw a free-hand curve with a fine pen.

Rybakov's prose, though a bit too quick on its feet to be called plodding, comes across as colorless and rarely gets off the ground (whereas Bitov's rarely touches the ground); in six hundred and eighty-five pages I didn't notice a single simile. Little, Brown reportedly hoped for another best-selling "Doctor Zhivago," but there is in "Children of the Arbat" nothing of Pasternak's poetry and magical sweep of vision and coincidence. Both novels under review, in fact, induce sensations of claustrophobia: in Bitov's we are caught inside a human head, and in Rybakov's inside a totalitarian state. But Rybakov does show some modernist daring in the shape of the book: big as it is, it feels like a fragment, a ragged thick slice of life. Almost all the questions raised by its multitudinous soap opera are left unanswered. Will Sasha someday return to Moscow, or will he accumulate ever-longer sentences with his rambunctious free spirit? Will Varya find happiness away from her drawing board as well as at it? Will Vika succeed in disentangling herself from the N.K.V.D. and make a go of her marriage with an unnamed famous architect? Why won't Zida tell Sasha why she has come to this wild taiga? What will lovelorn Lena do now that Yuri is posted to Leningrad? What will happen to Mark Ryazanov, who thinks he still enjoys Stalin's favor? Who knows? Only Kirov, who is assassinated, has his story rounded out; and Stalin's has been rounded out by history. A number of the children of the Arbat, introduced with considerable ceremony, do a single turn and then retire to the wings, waiting perhaps for the next act, or the next opera. Can this drastically unresolved large novel be the mere first installment of a giant roman-fleuve cascading in rough parallel to the author's own eventful life? It is, Rybakov declared in a *Time* interview last year; he plans two more installments of his saga, bringing the reader up through the Second World War, in which Rybakov, rehabilitated after a stretch in Siberia, served as a much decorated tank commander.

But "Children of the Arbat"—whose American publisher gives no hint of anything less than a complete novel—doesn't even tell how Sasha survived his first Siberian winter. On the public level, a climax of sorts is reached in Kirov's assassination, which will set off the historical purges to come. On the private level, things stay up in the air. For all its wealth of characters, the novel feels light and thin. It lacks the increased gravity of history rounding a curve. It dares to enter Stalin's head, but it cannot climb outside Stalin's heritage. It conceives happiness in the traditional Russian way, as something filched from the state—a kind of spiritual sneaking, a defiant privacy and personal freedom. "The state had always seemed to Sasha so all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-pervasive. In fact, it wasn't so. You could avoid the state." Might the state itself change for the better? This question lies well beyond the horizon of this novel, and we scan the daily newspaper for the answer. —JOHN UPDIKE

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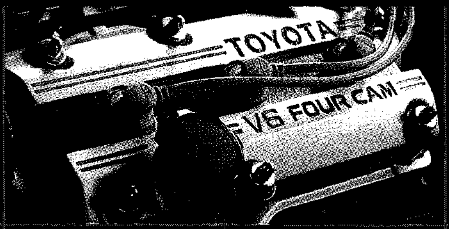

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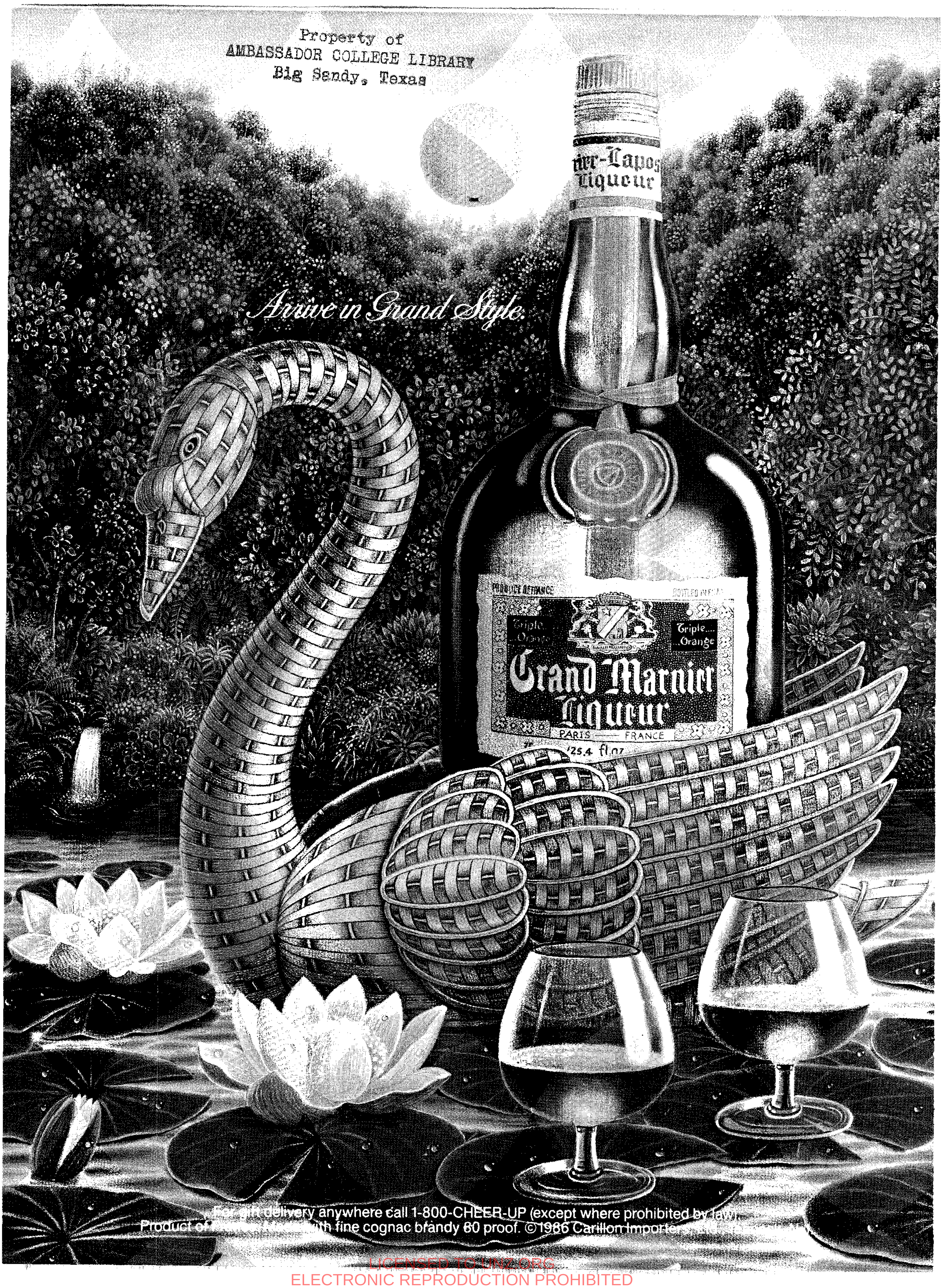
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